
with an essay by Antonio Pizza

Alberto Campo Baeza

Works and Projects

GG®

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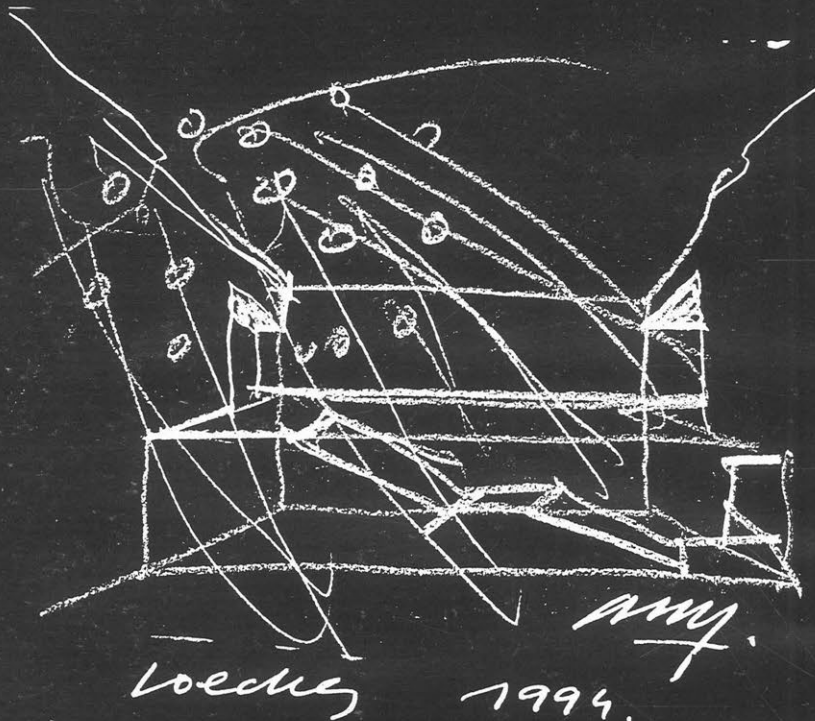
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The Quest for Abstract Architecture:

Alberto Campo Baeza

by Antonio Pizarro

Alberto Campo Baeza graduated from the Escuela de Arquitectura de Madrid in 1971. He belongs to that group of Spanish architects which had the good fortune to experience first-hand the gradual though decisive period of transition –most notably in the political sphere– which led to the reinstatement of democratic, non-military government in Spain after the period of autarchic, dictatorial rule that ended with the death of Franco in 1975, a historic event that has since been interpreted in widely differing ways. From the very beginning, Campo Baeza's architecture has been one of transition, a gradual shift from early exercises reflecting –for better or worse– stubbornly localist architectural concerns, towards a form of abstraction based on a 'disregard' for the spatial, temporal, social and cultural contexts of architecture.

Recent historical studies of Spanish architecture have tended on the whole to be taxonomic. Thus, 1970s architecture in Madrid –a city then coming to grips with a burgeoning demand for housing, and anxiously intent on building a new political identity to counteract the dangerous centralist tendencies of the Franco era– is usually defined as eclectic, an amalgam of diverse 'rationalisms' and 'realisms' and their respective 'neo-' and 'post-' variations.

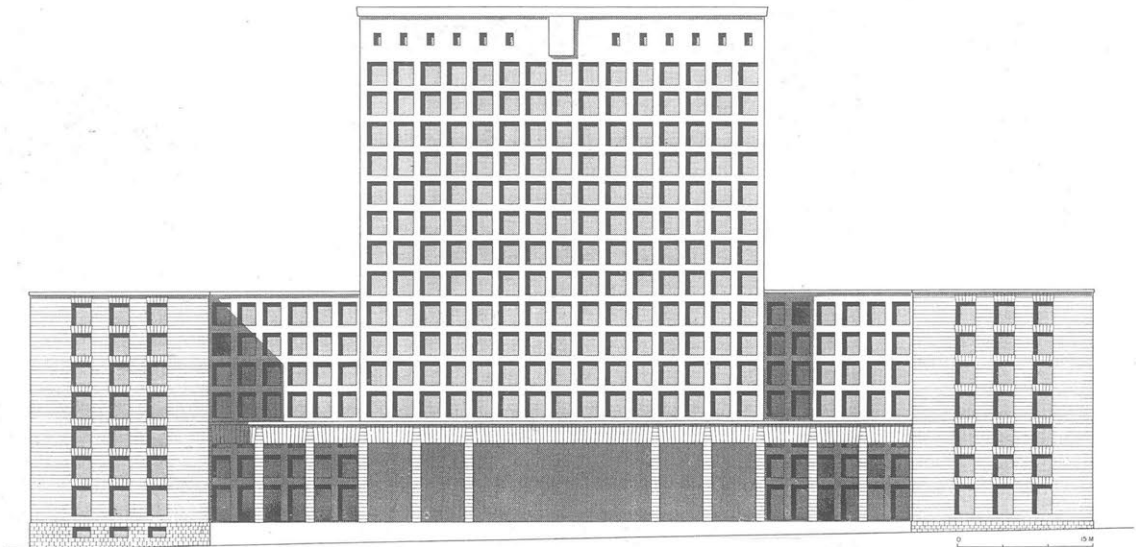
As always, it is difficult to see the critical value of labels like these. And while it seems pointless to insist on the already overworked notion of parochial rivalry between Barcelona and Madrid, attempts to determine the exact percentages of borrowed styles in the more or less efficacious personal mix of any architect you care to choose seem equally unhelpful for the purposes of this present study. In the end, approaches of this type merely generate tedious lists whose only usefulness is to please critics obsessed with origins, influences, alignments and divergences. As serious critical tools, they are virtually worthless.

However, genealogical approaches can be a good deal more productive in reconstructing the unique background of an architect, and in defining the nature and extent of his idiosyncratic engagement with a specific architectural context and culture.

Really outstanding teachers were few and far between when Campo Baeza was at university. His memoirs are virtually silent about his own teachers, though he does mention Rafael Aburto – architect of the former head office of the *Pueblo* newspaper in Madrid (1958-1959) and, with F. de Asís Cabrero, of the Trade Union Building, also in Madrid (1949-1951) – under whose supervision he graduated brilliantly at the end of his course. More important were the elective masters of his apprentice years, who had a stronger and more enduring influence on his early career. These figures provide a more likely starting-point for any attempt to define and contextualize his work, and to trace the process that gradually led to the distillation of his unique personal style.

Alberto Campo Baeza, Public school (project), Loeches, Madrid, 1994.

*Rafael Aburto with
Francisco de Asís
Cabrero, Trade
Union Building,
Madrid, 1949-1951.*



Many illustrious names have figured in Campo Baeza's crowded life –the influences he himself has cited range from Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe to Barragán and Tadao Ando– but I think he learned more important things from a select band of twentieth-century Spanish architects whom he personally knew and sometimes even worked with: Javier Carvajal, Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza, Alejandro de la Sota and Julio Cano Lasso. Carvajal – the architect, with R. García de Castro, of one of postwar Spanish architecture's most emblematic buildings, the School of Alts Estudis Mercantils in Barcelona (1954-1961) – is most admired by Campo Baeza for his “extreme musicality.” “Carvajal,” he says, “shows a surprising ability to articulate space, the same mastery of sequential spacing you find in the architects of the Alhambra, a building he much admires. His plans, elevations and sections develop so fluently that his buildings seem the most natural things in the world. Everything translates into forms of great power, though not into form for form's sake. His kind of form is a distillation of the circumstances and constraints that determine architectural necessity.” Significantly, at a recent conference in Pamplona (1998) on Carvajal's professional and teaching career, Campo Baeza made a detailed analysis of the Barcelona building, drawing attention to its evident linearity (dictated by its siting parallel to the Avenida Diagonal), the dialectic between the rather compact podium that roots it to the ground and the light, transparent classrooms rising above it, and the importance of the frame, which, apart from its purely structural function, makes evident the spatial and iconographic rhythms of the ensemble “by transmitting not only the weight of gravity to the ground, but also a sense of order to space.” In Campo Baeza's view, the regular, box-like prism is the most representative achievement of one of the few master architects of his generation.

*Javier Carvajal with
R. García de Castro,
the School of Alts
Estudis Mercantils,
Barcelona,
1954-1961.*



The next architect on the list, F.J. Sáenz de Oíza –a “volcanic personality” and creator of “passionate, cosmic, telluric” architecture–

Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza, Torres Blancas, Madrid, 1961-1968, and Banco de Bilbao y Vizcaya, Madrid, 1971-1981.



is admired by Campo Baeza not only for his persuasive radicalism, which he sees as organic in the Torres Blancas (Madrid, 1961-1968), and technological in the Banco de Bilbao y Vizcaya Building (Madrid, 1971-1981), but also for the magnetism of the auditorium in Santander (1984-1991), and the stark walled enclosure of the residential complex on the M30 (Madrid, 1986-90).

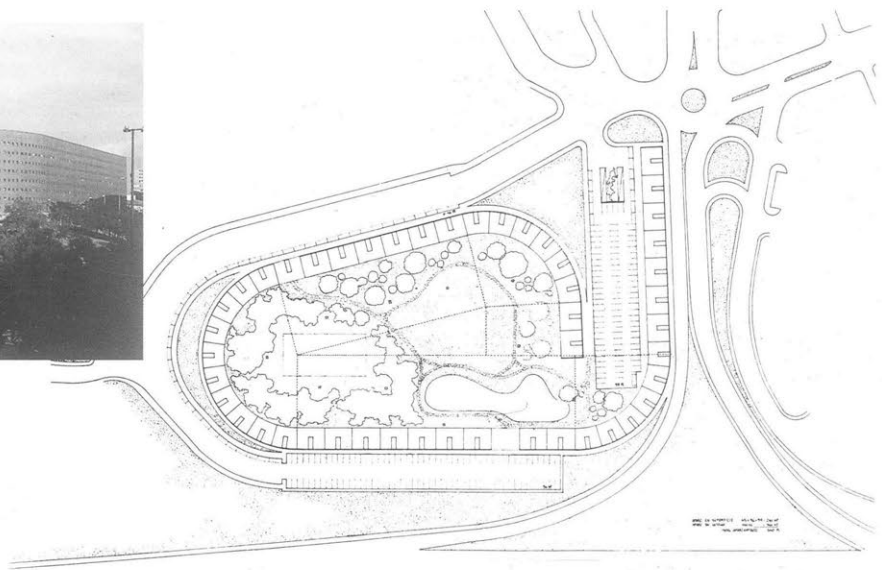
Campo Baeza's indebtedness to Alejandro de la Sota is more evident, both formally and conceptually. I think two works in particular were most influential on his stylistic and more general cultural development: the Colegio Maravillas gymnasium (Madrid, 1960-1961) and the Gobierno Civil in Tarragona (1954-1957). The gymnasium is an object lesson in how the inspired repetition of a set of expressive and other compositional modes can instantly convey an architectural idea. De la Sota's own sketches demonstrate with the utmost clarity how eloquently its generative principle is revealed in the design of the section, which effortlessly transforms site constraints into the *raison d'être* of the entire building. Similarly, the big metal frame unifies the composition by, on the one hand, solving the problem of the roof and providing support for the tiered classrooms fitted into the profiles of the reticular beams, and on the other, by using a characteristically urban facade to resolve the difference of level between the existing school and the road. De la Sota's unusual deployment of structural elements is also symbolically charged: though clinically objective—it is placed on view without superfluous comment—the frame in fact makes a complex emotional statement in which light, texture and color enhance perceptions of ambience and space.

In the Gobierno Civil in Tarragona, designed at a time when Modernism seemed to rule out the use of 'quality' materials, De la Sota's structural and sculptural uses marble to have an explicitly emotional intent that seems wholly symptomatic of his architecture. The stereometric basis of the design—the absolute geometry of the cube—is both emphasized and nullified by the building's dual institutional and residential role. The continuity of the long split marking off the institutional section is mitigated by the informal, off-axis sequencing of the three voids corresponding to the balconies of the dwellings, all of which subverts the rhetoric



Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oiza, residential complex on the M30, Madrid, 1986-1990

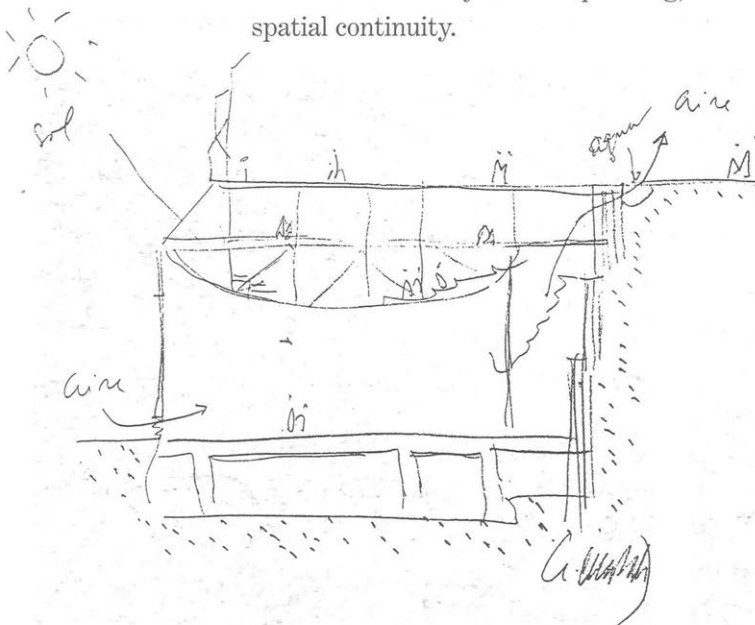
Alejandro de la Sota, Maravillas school gymnasium, Madrid, 1960-1961.



ical organization of a conventional 'official' facade. It is easy to see why Campo Baeza believes that De la Sota's "extreme elegance of gesture, and exactness of phrasing bordering on silence" stands comparison with Mies van der Rohe's mature style.

Campo Baeza's relation with Julio Cano Lasso was much more direct. Having taught him architectural design at the Escuela de Arquitectura de Madrid, Cano Lasso employed him as his assistant while he was still a student. Their professional relationship culminated in the design and construction (1974-1976) of a group of major educational complexes – three vocational training centers in Vitoria, Salamanca and Pamplona (all 1974), and the Universidad Laboral in Almería (1976).

The three vocational centers are similar in layout and functional design, and have a kind of rarefied austerity wholly appropriate to buildings which are, in effect, factory and school rolled into one. They were also designed to take a lot of wear and tear: the basic material inside and out is brick – Cano Lasso much admired both its tectonic adaptability and its timeless appeal across centuries and cultures – combined with ceramic facings and reticular metal beams whose rhythmic sequencing, enhanced by tall windows, creates a powerful sense of spatial continuity.



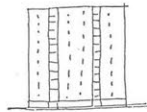


Alejandro de la Sota, Gobierno Civil, Tarragona, 1954-1957.

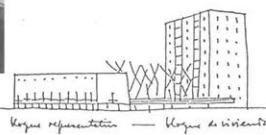
Proyecto para un estudio de la Tarragona.

En principio, todos los edificios de Gobierno Civil, los recuerda uno a otro.

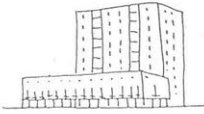
un bloque de viviendas.



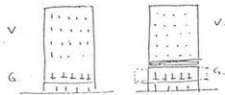
un bloque representativo me lo imaginaba horizontal



(En el programa del G.C. de Tarragona es grande el volumen de viviendas-5.)



Los edificios de Tarragona obligan a una altura de fachada principal que fuerza a traer a ella las viviendas.



Se piensa en reparar, cortar, volúmenes...

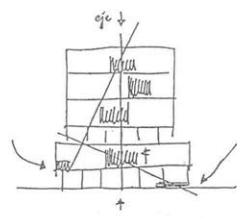
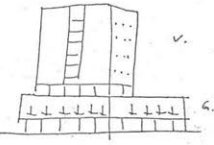
VIVIENDAS IMPORTANTES



GOBIERNO

VIVIENDAS SECUNDARIAS

... y el edificio puede dar composición así ya que, aquí la cuestión, todo el "Gobierno Civil", entra en una sola planta. Manteniendo los volúmenes, nos resulta



Queremos que en G.C. y no rompa en volúmenes de viviendas - cuestión de jerarquías en fachada -

Se busca el equilibrio de composición, es potencial, en un muro de muros: oscuros, blancos, blancos



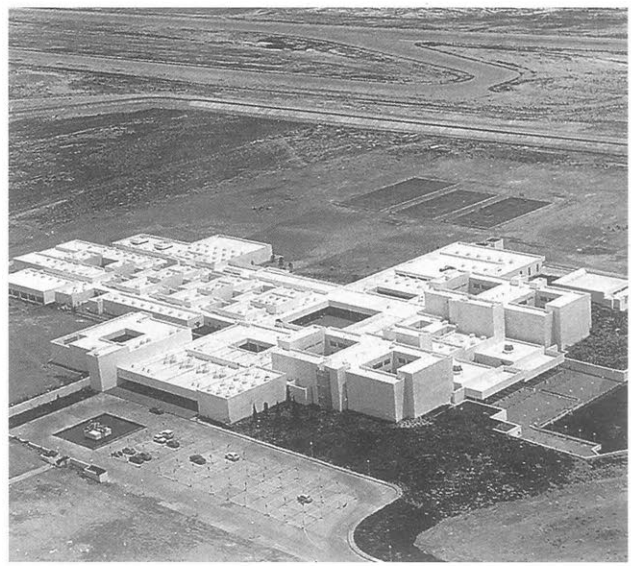
este volumen no nos arredra y es la forma

En resumen: un G.C. hoy es, en volúmenes, más que un G.C. propiamente dicho, vivienda jerárquica (con planta de oficina, oficina, oficina) - en el tema importante al volumen del despacho del Sr. Gobernador...

El edificio de la ordenanza de Tarragona al empleo de la piedra en fachada nos lleva (a mi juicio) a una forma como la del Anteproyecto que recuerda inmediatamente la de Girona o Barcelona de hace años... y es que la piedra pesa y sus formas son más estables

In the Universidad Laboral de Almería, some of the influences on Campo Baeza's later development are rather easier to recognize. The plan of this inward-looking university citadel is rigorously modular - two orthogonal axes intersect in a large porticoed plaza which is both a circulation hub and a social rendezvous conveniently sheltered from wind and dust. Chess-board layout and bright white lime plaster enhance the impact of its starkly unadorned volumes, which are blind on the outside but give inside onto internal oasis-like courtyards open to the sky or illuminated from above with skylights. As Lasso says in his own report, the solids of the markedly sculptural composition stand starkly aloof like purposeful landmarks,

Julio Cano Lasso and Alberto Campo Baeza, professional training center, Salamanca, 1975, and Universidad Laboral, Almería, 1976.



spatial events, in the stony, almost desert-like landscape: “We wanted to graft something authentically rational onto the roots of Andalusia’s Mediterranean tradition. We thought it important to demonstrate that both the principles and the characteristic features of popular architecture can be used to create totally modern, functional buildings that are much better suited to many of our environments than imported highbrow architecture.”

Of De la Sota’s many influences on Campo Baeza, the most important – and the most evident in his projects over subsequent years – has been the ‘idealization’ that has driven him ever more obsessively towards an architecture in which forms, functions, volumetrics and other standard components of architectural design are synthesized and therefore sublimated in a unified statement charged with theoretical implications. And yet, the actual *content* of the statement is neither an erudite historical and/or critical survey of architectural typology, nor a pointlessly self-regarding intellectual exercise, but an intrinsic feature of the construction itself which identifies, communicates and authenticates the *quidditas* of what the architect intends to achieve.

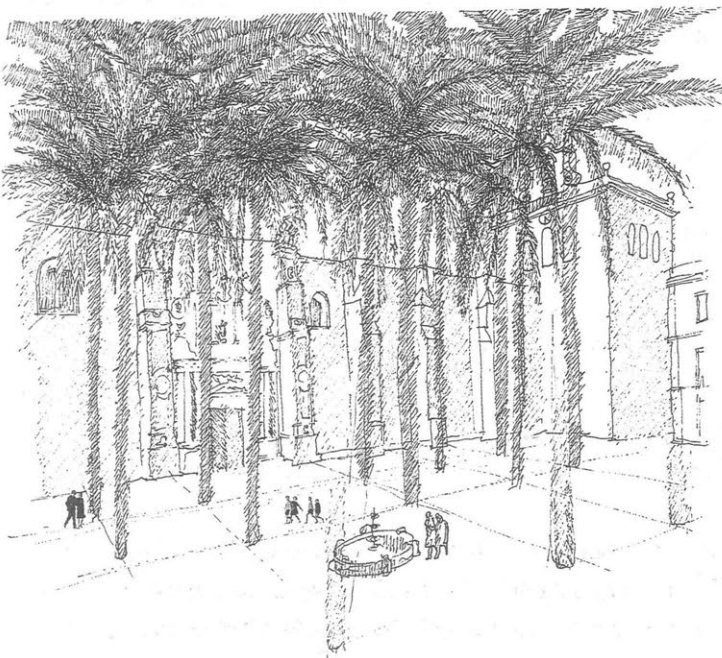
Campo Baeza makes the point clearly enough in the introduction to the anthology of his most important writings, *La idea construida. La arquitectura a la luz de las palabras* (Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos, Madrid, 1996; 1998), from which the quotations in this essay are taken. “Architecture is idea expressed through forms ... idea in *constructed* form. Far from being a history of forms, architectural history is really a history of constructed ideas. Forms are destroyed with the passing of time; ideas remain and are eternal.”

Gravity and *light* are the key concepts that translate poetic insight into physical reality in Campo Baeza’s architecture. “Gravity constructs space; light constructs time, makes time meaningful. The central concerns of architecture are how to control gravity, and how to relate to light. Indeed, the very future of architecture depends on whether a new understanding of these phenomena can be achieved.” For the architect, *homo faber*’s ultimate aim in undertaking this daunting task can only be the creation of a ‘beauty’ necessarily located ‘outside’ time and space, a yearning for a kind of classical perfection or ideal knowledge limited

only by the epistemological constraints of the architectural model itself. Significantly, Campo Baeza locates the *raison d’être* of architectural process and product in transcendental values that lie in the world of the *beyond*, and whose physical materialization therefore transcends the geographical and temporal constraints of chronological history. “Architecture must offer human beings that mysterious yet tangible ‘other’ which is beauty. The intelligent kind of beauty that emanates from constructed ideas. This is something much, much more than construction in the normal sense.”

Since gravity –an invisible static force– and light –the invisible electromagnetic radiation that makes objects visible to the human eye–

Alberto Campo Baeza, project for the Cathedral square, Almería, 1978.



Alberto Campo
Baeza, nursery
school in Aspe,
Alicante, 1982.



have by definition almost no contingent attributes in the philosophical sense, Campo Baeza tends to see them as absolute, eternal values. So we must now try to see what these 'superior categories' mean in relation to historical events and places, the specificities of time and space.

Campo Baeza himself gives some idea of their meaning when he says, for example, that modern inventions like plate glass and metal framework are directly related to gravity and light. The fact that plate glass can make the upper horizontal surfaces of buildings transparent, while steel frames can separate the skin of a building from its structural support, suggests new tectonic solutions to the problem of gravity.

In other words, Campo Baeza's kind of architecture is by definition *inclusive* of inescapable realities like context, function, composition and construction, but claims to be *exclusive* in formal terms; or as he himself puts it, it is "essential" but not "minimalist". Minimalism is just another 'ism', whereas *essentiality*—a more conceptual notion in that it suggests both simplification and purification, an expression of essence—is what bodies forth the "constructed idea" and determines the poetics of its formulation. Paraphrasing Mies van der Rohe's *less is more*, Campo Baeza defines his concept of "more with less" (*más con menos*) as "... a more which keeps human beings and the complexity of their culture firmly at the center of the created world, at the center of architecture. And a less which, leaving all questions of minimalism aside, distils the essence of a design by using a 'precise number of elements' to translate ideas into physical reality."

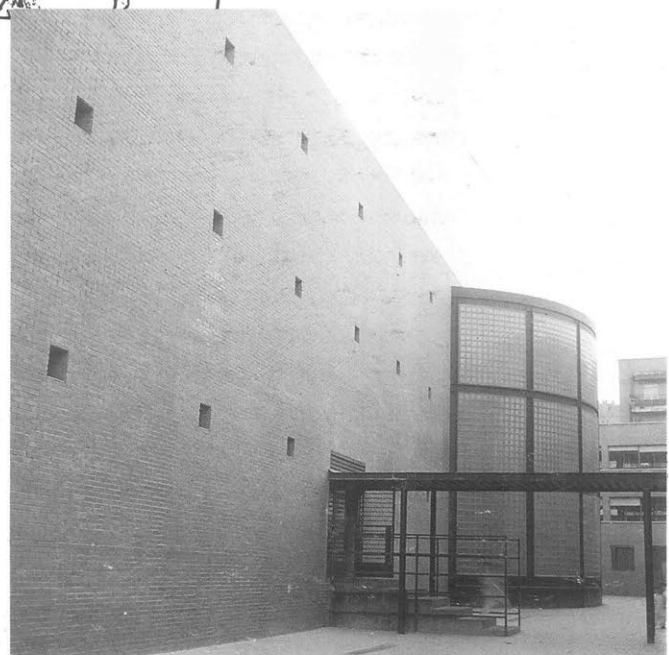
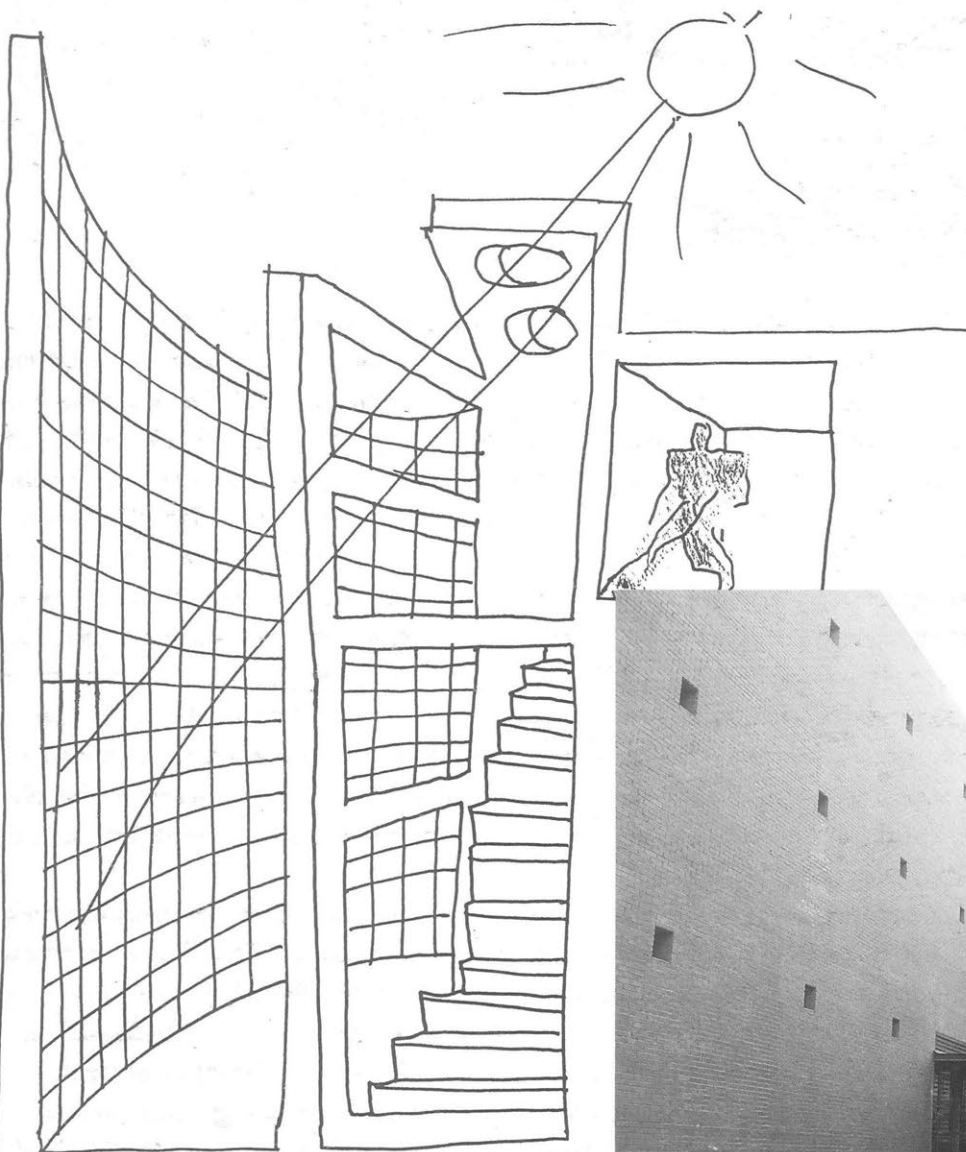
The radicalism implicit in all this is already evident in Campo Baeza's competition project (1978) for the redesign of a public square in Almería, which creates an "architecture without buildings" of twenty-four palm-trees planted to resemble the nave of an imaginary cathedral whose roof is the sky. The sunlight entering the enclosure is filtered and spiritualized not by high windows and Gothic columns, but by palm fronds and tall trunks that create an unmistakably 'architectural' effect.

From the early 1980s, the formal restraint and volumetric simplicity of buildings like the Town Hall in Fene (1980) and the nursery school in Aspe (1982) began to cohere in a recognisably personal language. In the nursery school, the ostentatious 'purity' of what is an es-

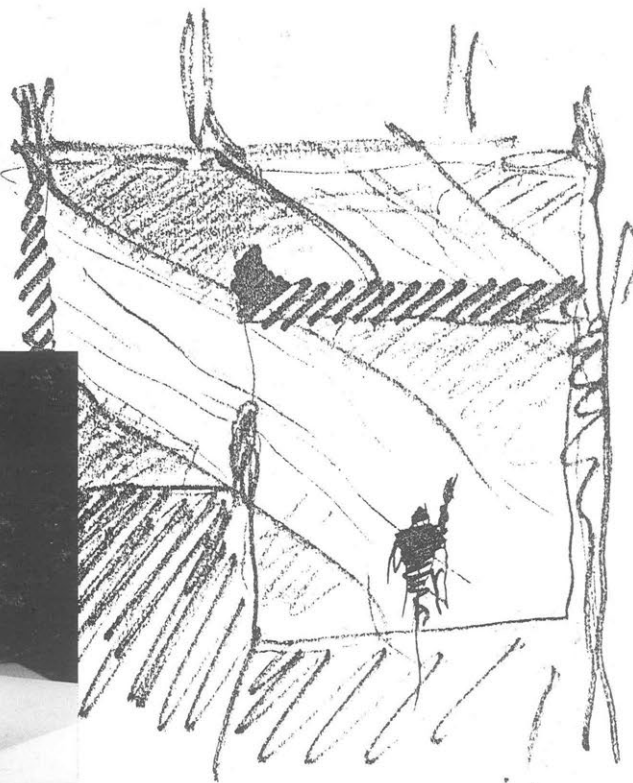
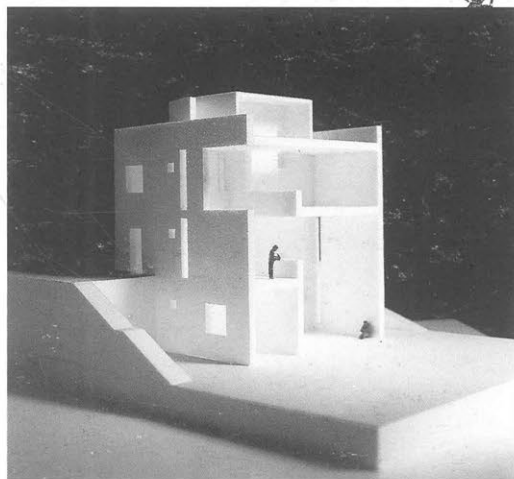
*Alberto Campo
Baeza, public
school in San
Fermín, Madrid,
1985.*

essentially inward-looking structure forms a marked contrast with the general dereliction of the context, while volume has been carefully pared down by bending and excavating the walls to produce articulated sequences of spaces. The brilliant white surfaces –another element in the separation from context– are offset by the natural hues of the slender palm-trees in the two courtyards. The increasing assertiveness of these early 1980s buildings has been described by some critics as ‘neo-rationalist’.

The San Sebastián de los Reyes public school (Madrid, 1983), a linear arrangement of free-standing prisms along a connecting axis, was followed by the San Fermín public school (Madrid, 1985), which reshuffled the same basic elements to produce a north-facing, windowless brick wall and open, south-facing classrooms. The cylindrical stairwell is jointed on- to the main structure as a lightwell, a sort of radiant crystal which allows light to penetrate the tectonic solidity of the building.



Alberto Campo
Baeza, *Turégano*
House, Pozuelo,
Madrid, 1988.



The Turégano House (Madrid 1988) is an outstanding example of how –in defiance of stylistic orthodoxy– the control of light can become a major factor in determining the nature and geometrical impact of space. As one of the supreme structuring principles of architectural space, light in all its manifestations –horizontal, vertical, diagonal, zenithal– had by this stage become not so much an obsessive theme, as the founding principle of Campo Baeza's architecture. Significantly, he points to the Pantheon as a prime example of what he was trying to achieve: "If the new mayor of Rome decided to close up the bull's-eye in the roof –it is almost nine meters in diameter– to keep out the rain and cold, many things would happen ... or rather, many things wouldn't happen. Nothing of that perfect construction, that marvellous composition, would be altered. The building would still convey its universal message, and the venerable landscape of Ancient Rome would not reveal all its secrets (at least not on the first night). And yet, no trace would remain of that miraculous sun-trap devised by human beings to ensure that light from their friendly star would rain down inside the building every single day of the year. The Sun would mourn its passing, and so would Architecture, because they are more than just friends."

Though the Turégano House exemplifies several basic features of Campo Baeza's method, the most noticeable thing about it is the stress it lays on the theme of the 'house', or rather, *the archetypal dwelling*, which in its primitive, unadorned state formalizes a set of architectural values that can be transferred to other functional contexts. In this particular case, Campo Baeza's repertoire of compositional motifs translates into primary geometrical configurations, while the archetypal 'cube' of the primitive hut achieves greater prominence through a carefully balanced contrast between cool expanses of glass and brilliant white cladding. The same principles are also at work in the sequence of detached houses that followed – the García Marcos House in Madrid (1991), the four villas in Algiers (1992), and the

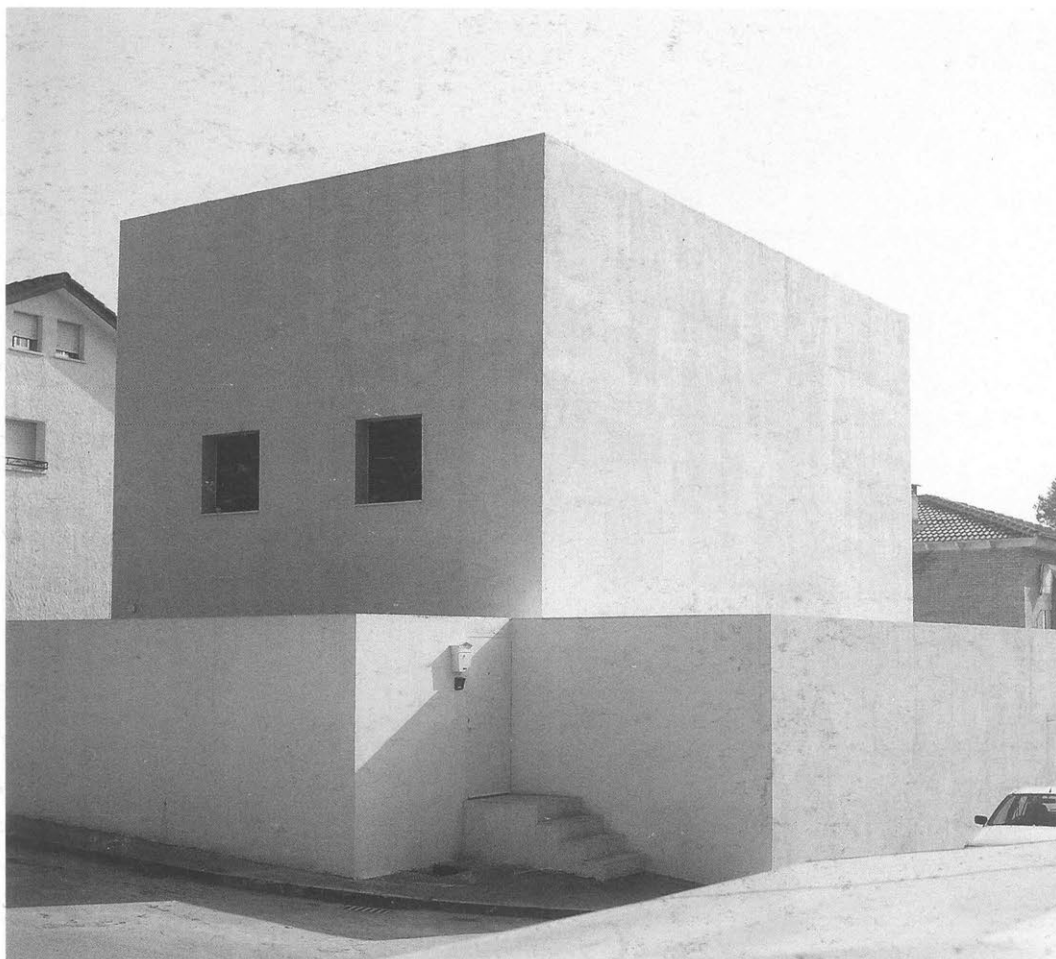
*Alberto Campo
Baeza, villas for
Spanish Embassy,
Algiers, 1992.*



Gaspar House in Cádiz (1992) –whose graphically etched volumes at last stand alone in splendid isolation. These eloquently introverted clusters of sun-drenched solids are so powerful precisely because they convey a sense of total separation, irrevocable detachment from the ‘other’. Differences of level, self-contained courtyards, volumes delimited by boundary walls– everything is totally and systematically decontextualized. And yet, what looks like a starkly delineated set of closed, box-like prisms is, in fact, open to the sky.

What I have elsewhere called a “state of alienation” is more than evident in the much-published photographs of the Gaspar House patios, in which treetops –traces of external reality– crowd the borders of a ‘sacred compound’ like abstract presences forming the static backdrop to a sophisticated stage design. Inside the courtyards, brilliant surfaces sculpted by reflected light encircle, subjugate, enfeeble, reduce to simulacra the concrete manifestations of a physical world excluded from the initiatory rites that place the house apart from everyday reality. Trees, mirror pools, even some of the masses themselves, have a ghostly lack of solidity, while the natural landscape seems weirdly de-natured, subtly recontextualized and aestheticized as a decontextualized visionary setting for the house. The sense of solitude is heightened not only by this explicit segregation of attendant pseudo-natural references that serve to introduce the development of the architectural setting, but also by the isolation of the human figures who inhabit the house. Significantly, Campo Baeza’s drawings, models and photographs are peopled by solitary human beings. One in particular –a sketch of the García Marcos House in which weirdly elongated human figures seem positively Giacomettian in their isolation– shows how central the notion of erosion, excavation, removal,

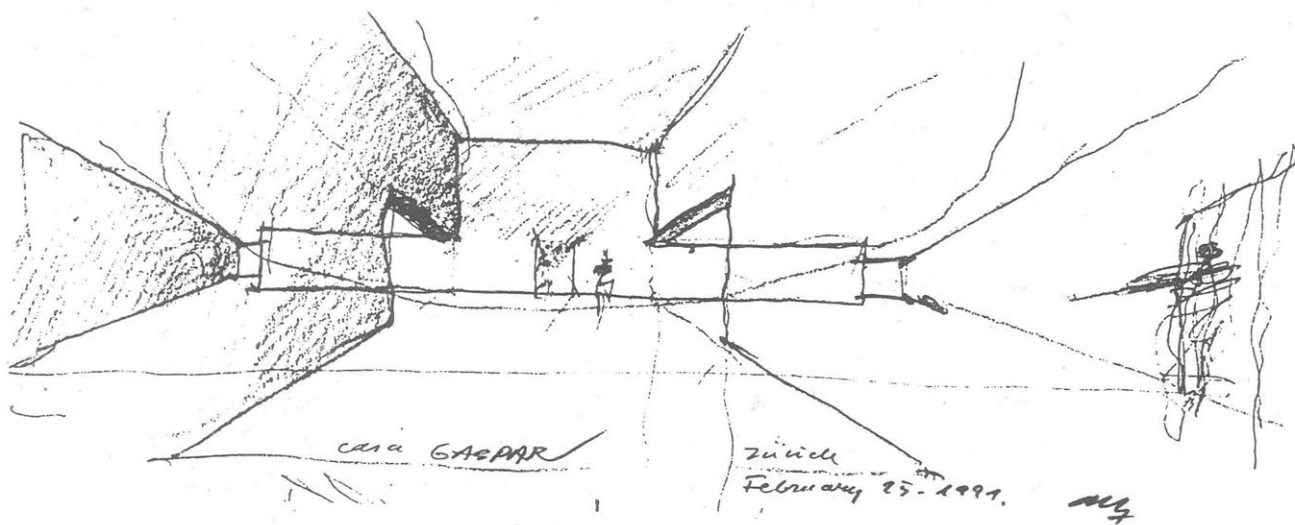
Alberto Campo
Baeza, García
Marcos House,
Valdemoro, Madrid,
1991.

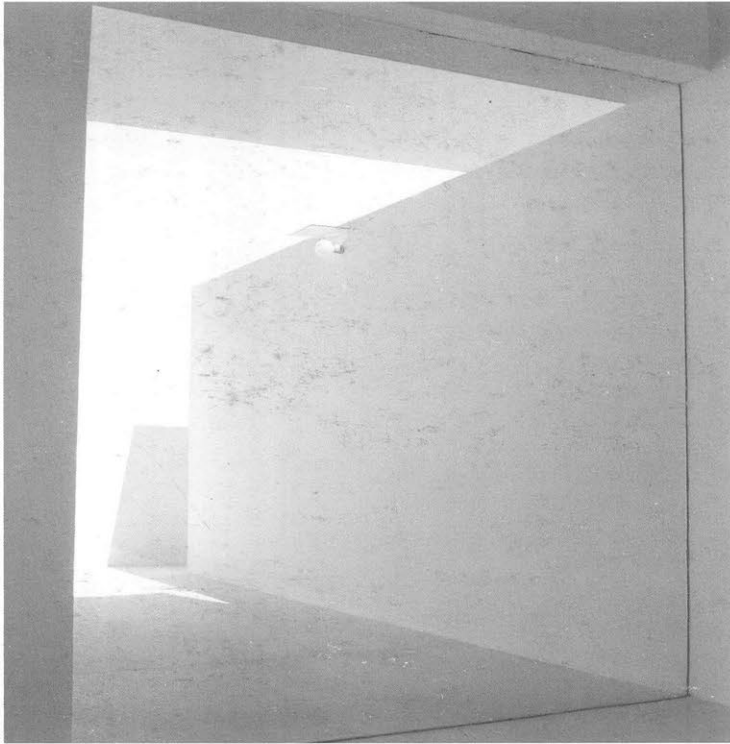


reduction, is in Campo Baeza's later architecture. Though the stereotomic, almost lithoidical nature of his buildings is never denied, the archetypal implications of mass are undermined, emptied, pared down, lightened, yet never wholly obliterated.

All this is a long way from continuity with context. Open, permeable, multi-dimensional space there certainly is –and it is very important– but it is all *inside* the building. Campo Baeza's cult of the 'domestic' might seem Loosian in origin were it not for the fact that the richness of experience it provides is created wholly –or prevalently– by light, and more particularly, by diagonal light cutting across sun-filled, hermetically-sealed, double and triple height voids that both characterize and dematerialize the volumetric density of the buildings. "A good painter knows exactly how to use white surfaces to transmit light from the sun directly into inner space. In architecture, white is much more than a pure abstraction. It provides a secure and effective base from which to work with light: you can capture it, reflect it, etch with it, make it slide around. You control space by controlling light, by illuminating the white surfaces that give it shape."

Obviously and inevitably, Campo Baeza's 'mysticism of light' is nostalgic in intent. In the harsh world of today, where every natural phenomenon has been irredeemably degraded and corrupted, and finding –anywhere on the planet– a 'virgin' site to build on is simply wishful thinking, what 'apparently' could be more uncontaminated than the sky? Certainly not our countryside, our coasts or any other purely physical place, where human intervention has left not only indelible scars but often terrible destruction in its wake. There remains





Alberto Campo
Baeza, *Gaspar
House, Zahora,
Cadiz, 1992.*

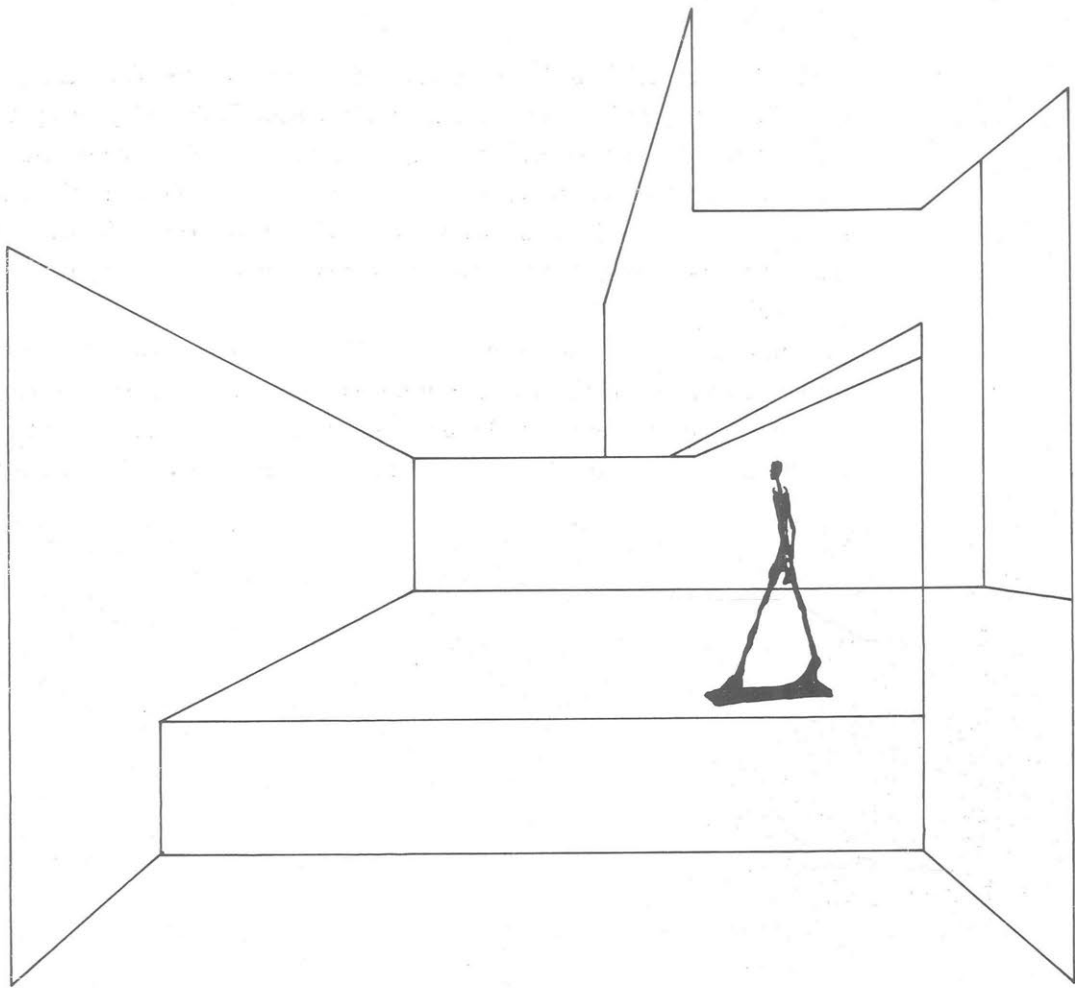
only our view of the sky, which for Campo Baeza is literally the place where “our physical world penetrates a world beyond”.

Although our atmosphere is suffering the consequences of uncontrolled urbanization and the air around us is often unbreathable, the view *from* one of Campo Baeza’s houses –whose interaction with the outside world is regulated by glass expanses framed by white wall panels– can offer a comfortably sublimated perspective on life. In this sense, his buildings convey a ‘primal nostalgia’ for pre-historical existence and a lost spiritual plenitude, for a “paradise of identities” cadenced by the primeval dialectic of light and darkness, where the light of the sun, moon and stars makes visible the abstract space of *possibility* in all its power. Clearly, we are speaking here of nothing less than the redeeming power of art, the creation of an ar-

tificial, imaginary universe capable of restoring the harmonies which modern men and women have lost in their distorted relationships with the physical world. In an article in *A+U* magazine (July 1985), Campo Baeza says: “I feel emotion, therefore I exist, [...] but then, isn’t architecture all about emotion? We should tell the world that architecture is a synthesis of rational construction and irrational emotion, precept and passion. This architecture, which is made of and arouses emotion, will always be *cultured* architecture. Unlike today’s erudite architecture, which more often than not is unashamedly exhibitionist, cultured architecture speaks a silent language which can sometimes be difficult to explain, but is always easy to understand.”

One of the most wonderful historical examples of ‘light-redeeming’ architecture is the Gothic cathedral, whose very stone seems to emanate light. As Hans Sedlmayr says in *Das Licht in seinen künstlerischen Manifestationen* (Mittenwald Mäander, 1979): “The light inside a cathedral does not seem to come from the outside. To describe with any accuracy the effect it has, one would have to say: light is propagated by the walls themselves, the walls gleam.” On the other hand, sunlight filtering in through stained-glass windows draws architectural detailing and tracery (e.g. the leading of the windows) on the walls opposite them which often cannot be seen in the windows themselves because they are so far away. Commenting on one of the interiors of the Turégano House, Campo Baeza points to a similar effect in a painting by a disciple of Rembrandt, *Man Reading at a Table in a Lofty Room* (c. 1631-1650), in which an invisible window is made visible by the shadow of its frame and leading on the floor, and rays of sun streaming into the room contrast vividly with the darkness that surrounds the scholar bending over his book. The projections that invade the interiors of Campo Baeza’s houses are much more clear and precise because the window frames are unusually schematic in design, but this in no way diminishes their metaphorical impact. They become signs –and dreams– of ‘something else’, so much so that, as in the Dutch painting, it would

Alberto Campo
Baeza, García
Marcos House,
Valdemoro, Madrid,
1991.



come as no surprise to walk into a room and find a scholar absorbed in solitary meditation. A genuine culture of the *domus* is also at work in Campo Baeza's public buildings, most notably the 'Drago' school in Cádiz (1992). Typologically it resembles a convent: the inward-looking complex has the usual stereometric features and relates to the coastal scenery through windows set in blind expanses of wall, which thus become framed views of the outside world. And although the building is organized around a square distribution courtyard to remedy the unevenness of the site, all the communal spaces hug the inside of the west wall. The only two windows in the main facade –eyes gazing at the horizon– are there to bring light to major functional areas. The smaller one illuminates the triple-height entrance lobby, while the larger beach-facing one, which is twice the size, illuminates the library and cafeteria, adding a public register to the dazzling whiteness of the sea view. This is more than a standard patio configuration with all the usual domestic connotations, then; it is also an assembly of architectural features semantically polarized to form a densely meaningful threshold between town and house, public and private.

The concepts of 'stereotomic' and 'tectonic' construction –they are borrowed from Semper, and have been studied in some depth by Kenneth Frampton in *Studies in Tectonic Culture. The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Architecture* (1995)– are central to the contrast between the inertia of mass and the leavening effects of light in Campo Baeza's architecture. The two building methods they imply are exemplified in Campo Baeza's project for the Dalmau House in Burgos (1990), whose ordinary domestic functions are grouped in a hollow, windowless base, while an upper glass volume provides a setting for

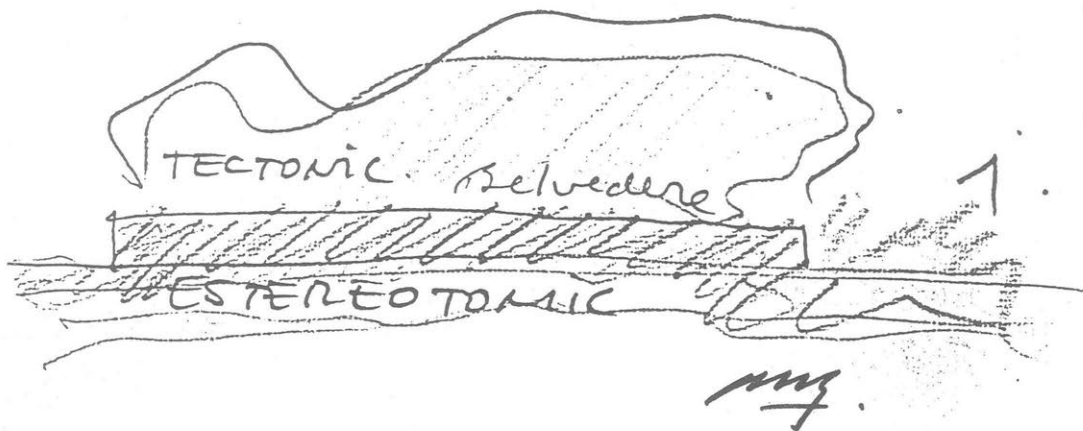
Alberto Campo
Baeza, 'Drago'
school, Cádiz,
1992.

the intellectual activities the house also had to accommodate. This duality, which is also a feature of the competition project for the Philharmonic Hall in Copenhagen (1993), is virtually a paradigm of the process by which light can progressively dematerialize, both conceptually and physically, the solid stone and almost total darkness of the primitive cave dwelling. And it is literally a process of sublimation: the totally transparent volumes –pure, ethereal, crystalline boxes– offer vantage points over the surrounding landscape from inside the body of the house.

The Caja General de Ahorros in Granada (1996), the most representative of Campo Baeza's recent designs, turns the architectural concept of the 'light-trap' into a thoroughly monumental statement. "The central courtyard, an authentic *impluvium* of light, gathers in solid Southern Mediterranean light through rooflights and reflects it off alabaster cladding to en-



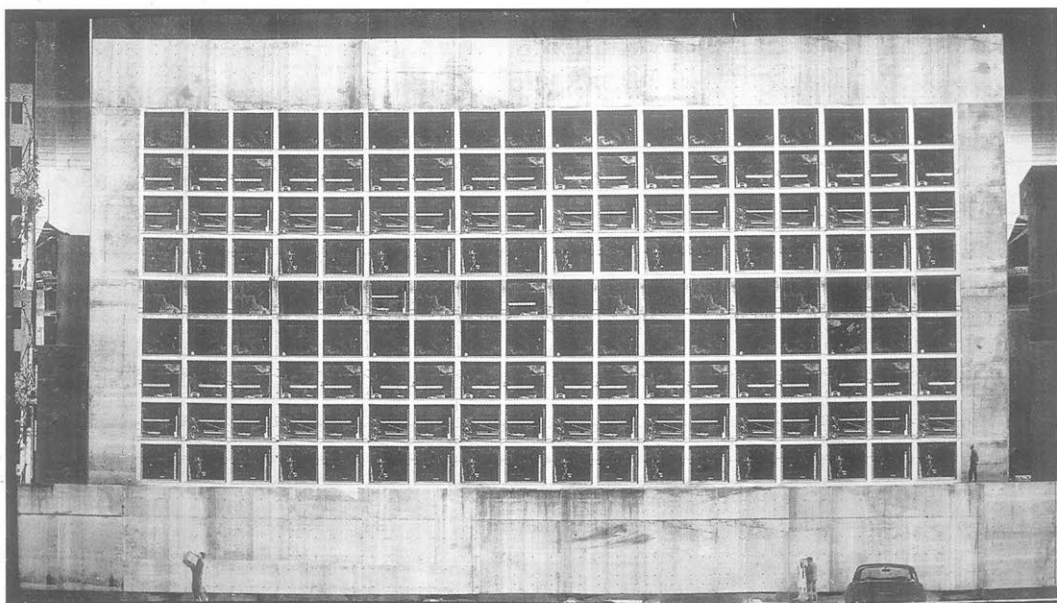
Alberto Campo
Baeza, competition
project for
Philharmonic
Hall, Copenhagen,
1993.



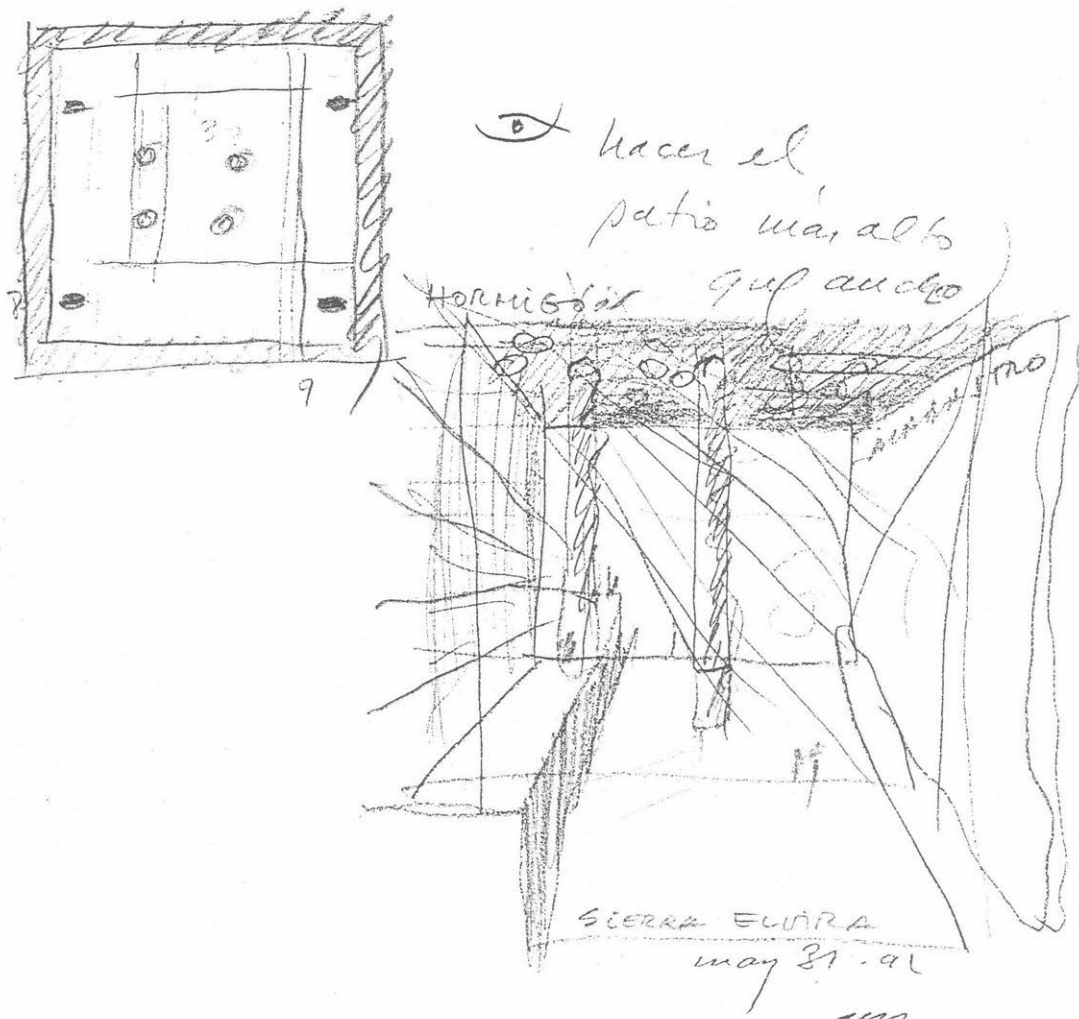
hance the illumination of the public rooms [...] a stereotomic concrete-and-stone box captures sunlight to illuminate a tectonic box immersed in an *impluvium* of light, a diagonal space traversed by diagonal light." Significantly and (so far) unusually, Campo Baeza has listed many of the major influences on this particular design; they range from Owen Williams' *Daily Mirror* Building and G. Pérez Villalta's painting *El navegante interior* to Granada Cathedral, one of the most amazing interiors of the Andalusian Renaissance. Obviously, what these three examples have in common is the *constructional* effect of light, its ability to sculpt space in a genuinely architectural way. In the Caja General de Ahorros Building, Campo Baeza used his full repertoire of light effects to create nothing less than a "a monument to the idea."

Although the word 'monument' is etymologically related to 'memory', 'permanence' and 'testimony', and monumentality is certainly an instance of permanence, any interpretation of permanence and time in modern culture has to reckon with the fact that these terms are more restricted in meaning than they once were. In Campo Baeza's architecture, time serves to delimit another meta-temporal dimension in which chronological time is suspended in frozen eternity. Time is constructed by light "which slowly but surely eliminates the superficial trappings with which architecture is all too often bedecked."

Alberto Campo
Baeza, Caja
General de
Ahorros, Granada,
1996-1999.



Alberto Campo
Baeza, Caja
General de
Ahorros, Granada,
1996-1999.



Architecture built of time and light is resistant to time and change, and aspires to classical permanence.

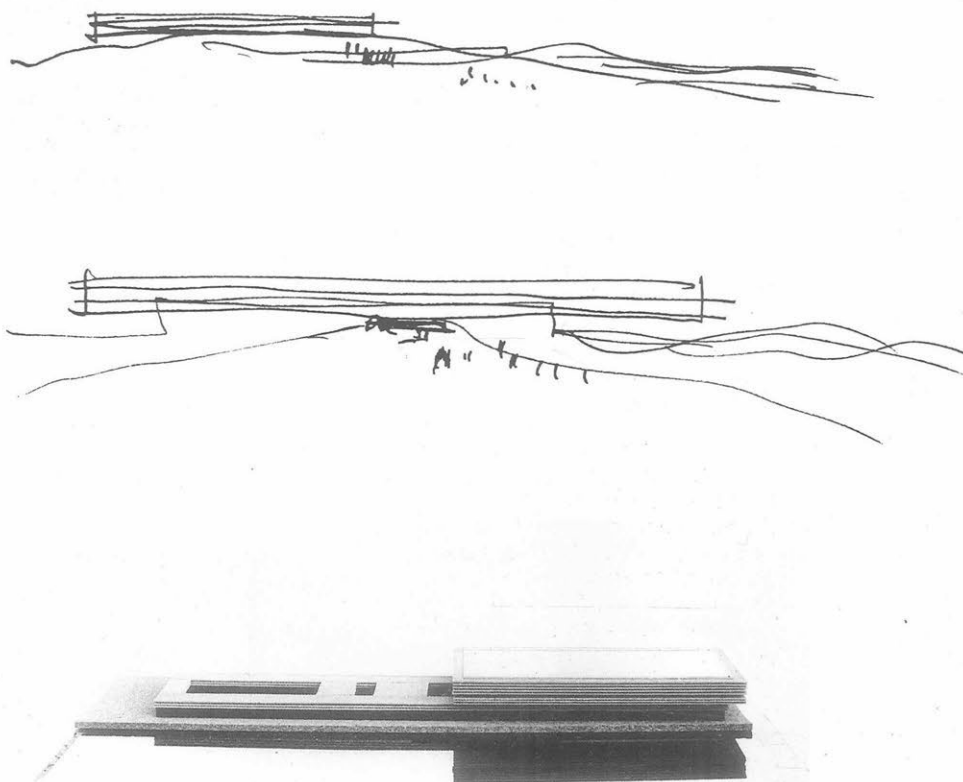
The project for South Tenerife Airport (first version, 1998) contains all these ideas. Though airport design is one of the most complex and challenging tasks facing architects today –physically and conceptually they epitomize those theories of ‘non-place’ that equate even architectural solidity with the hyper-technological abstractness of information systems– Campo Baeza roundly rejects all such futuristic speculation in his declared intention to “build an airport with thought rather than futile technologies that will sooner or later disappear; an idea that can withstand the passage of time.”

When seen as an attempt to raise architecture’s few basic paradigms to the status of absolutes, to extend the range and resources of abstract language, to reinstate the primeval significance of human habitation, the enduring whiteness of Campo Baeza’s buildings is rather easier to comprehend. For him, “white is a symbol of permanence, of the universal in space and the eternal in time. Hair invariably turns white as time passes. So do buildings.” Time, the Great Executioner, turns buildings white, but who does this time belong to exactly? Is it the time of the gods on high, or the time of earthbound mortals? No one would deny that architecture is built on ideas, but isn’t it about time that these ideas became physical things, started dirtying their hands with the realities of the here and now? If the ultimate aim of architecture is to attain Absolute Beauty, cannot this Beauty also be *our* Beauty, or must it always remain *abs-tract*, a thing drawn apart from the thing itself?

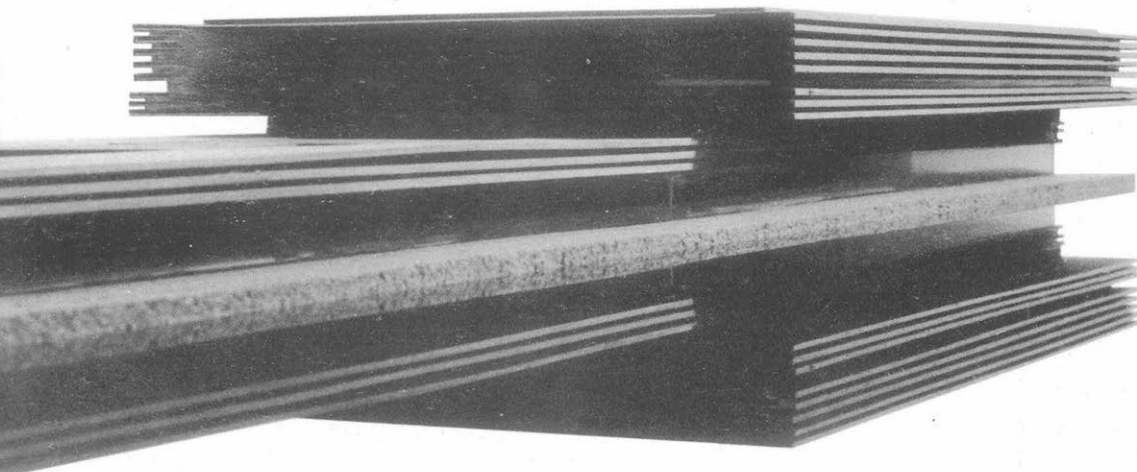
Works and Projects

Festival Hall,
Santander, 1971

This design for the Santander Festival Hall was the architect's final graduation project, with which he won his first-ever competition. Set beside the sea, this piece of horizontal architecture is posited to have a single, very squat mass containing all the facilities requested in the program. As if floating, a vast and also emphatically horizontal roof rests on this socle and accentuates the serenity of the whole. The 'Miesian' starting point is delicately nuanced by more Nordic intonations *à la* Jacobsen, with whom the architect hoped to work in 1971 - the year in which the Danish master died. The plans of the various floors are organized around different patios, and the whole thing is resolved with a framework and enclosures of steel and glass.

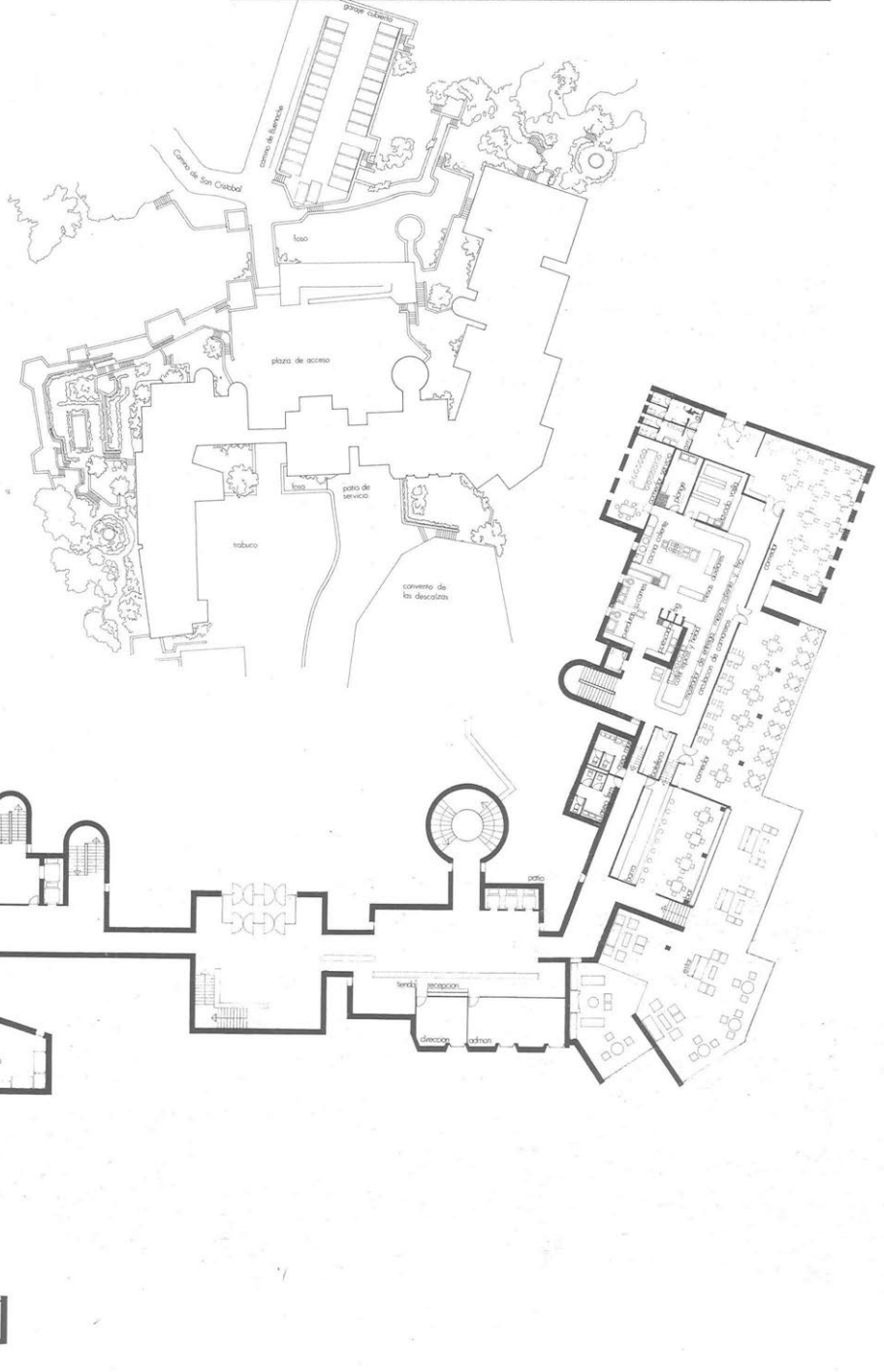
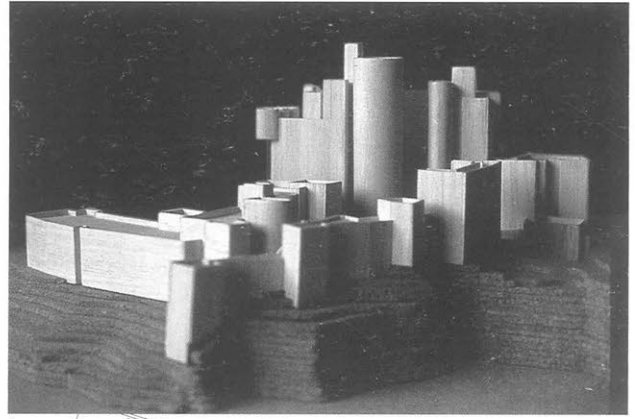


*Architect's sketch,
and top and side
views of model.*



in collaboration with Julio Cano Lasso,
Miguel Martín Escanciano, José Miguel Sanz
and Antonio Más Guindal

On the other hand, and also by learning the lesson of history in relation to what already exists there, said volumes rise up from the rock on which they sit in material continuity with it. The colossal concrete of goldish aggregate with which the building would be realized appears, then, like fresh stone. And between these fragments, the interior and exterior spaces would be continually conjoined, framing, in a variety of ways, all of them interesting, the beautiful surrounding countryside.



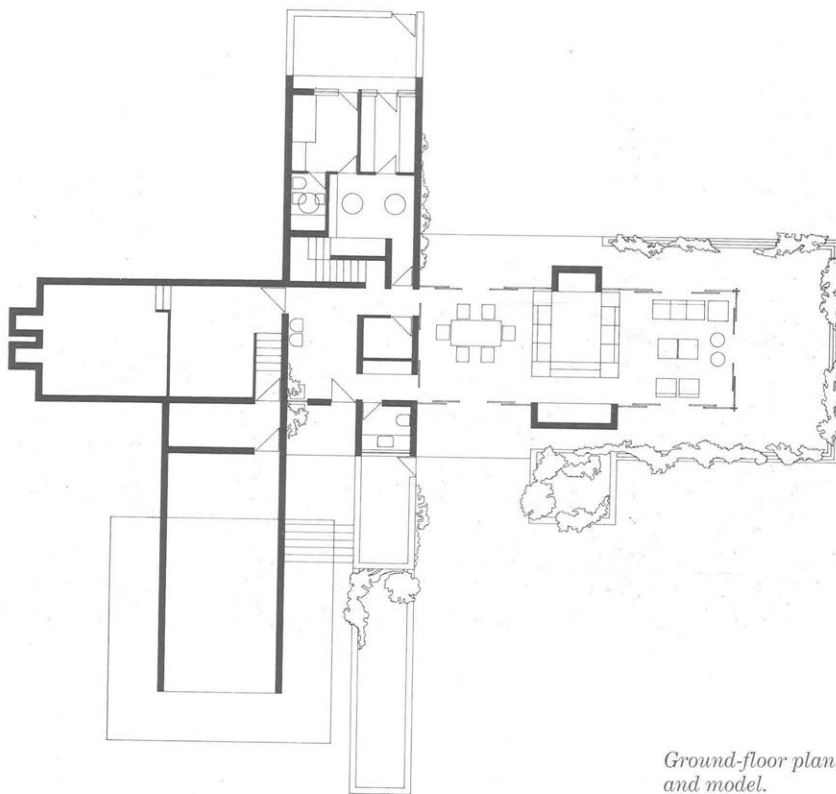
*Model, site plan,
and ground-floor
plan.*

García del Valle House, Ciudad Santo Domingo,
Algete, Madrid, 1974

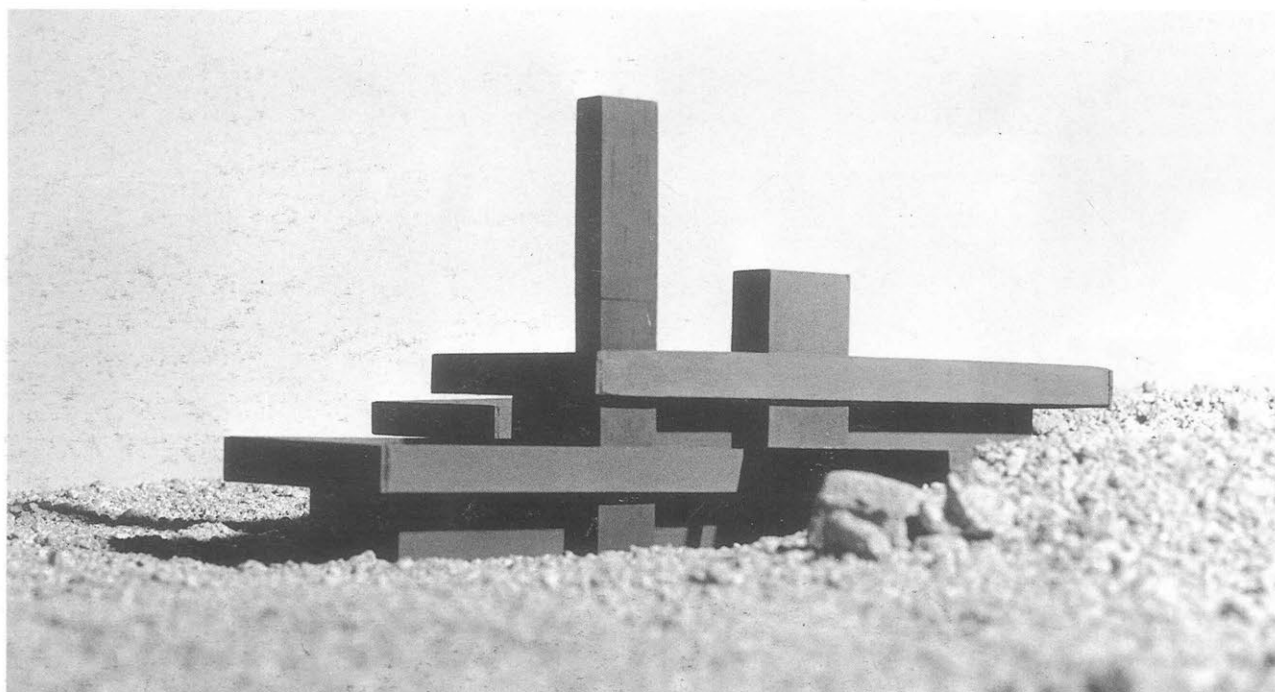
This is the architect's 'opera prima', although the first sketches for it had been committed to paper while he was still a student.

A deck-like architecture of a markedly 'Wrightean' kind is set out on a steeply sloping, elongated plot with fine views towards the north. As a result, the house strives to bond itself firmly to the terrain by means of a series of horizontal planes which are staggered in order to gain a purchase on the site.

This serene horizontality has its counterpoint in the vertical core of the staircase and, above all, in the extremely tall protruding chimney which gives the house its identity. The planes are subsumed by imposing breastworks which further accentuate, if such is possible, their horizontal character, one that is also emphasized by the reduced height of the roofs.

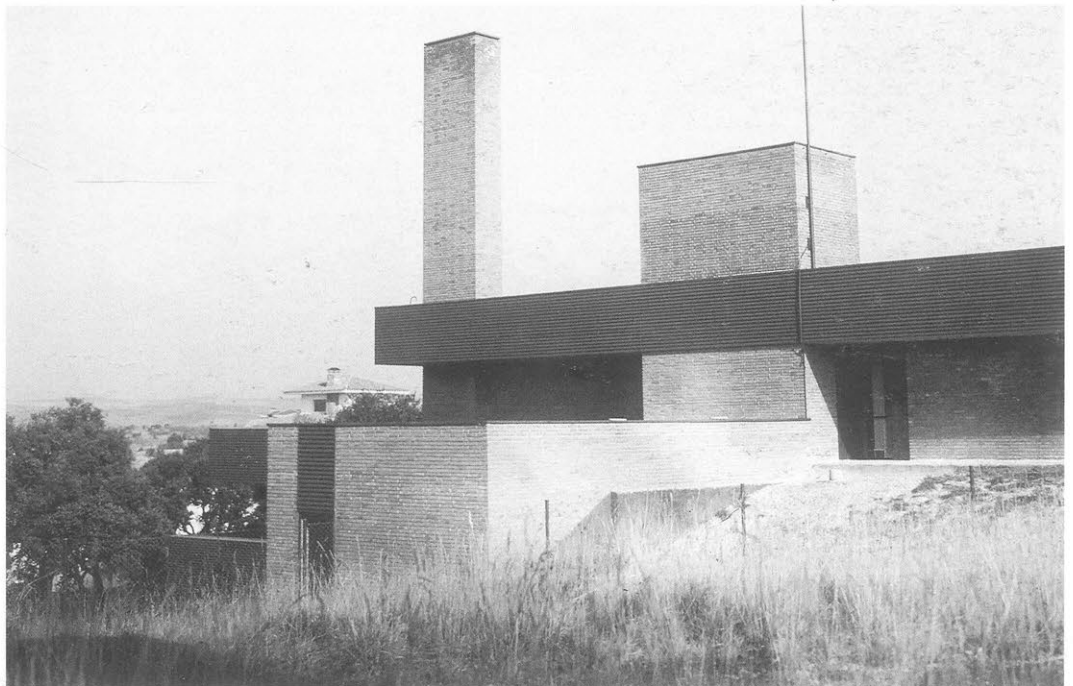


*Ground-floor plan,
and model.*

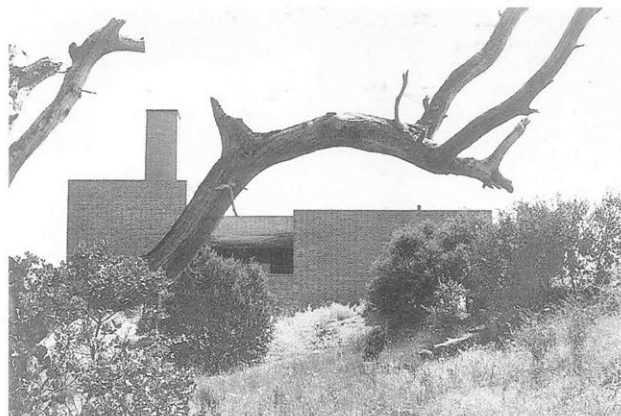




The roof and balcony overhangs.

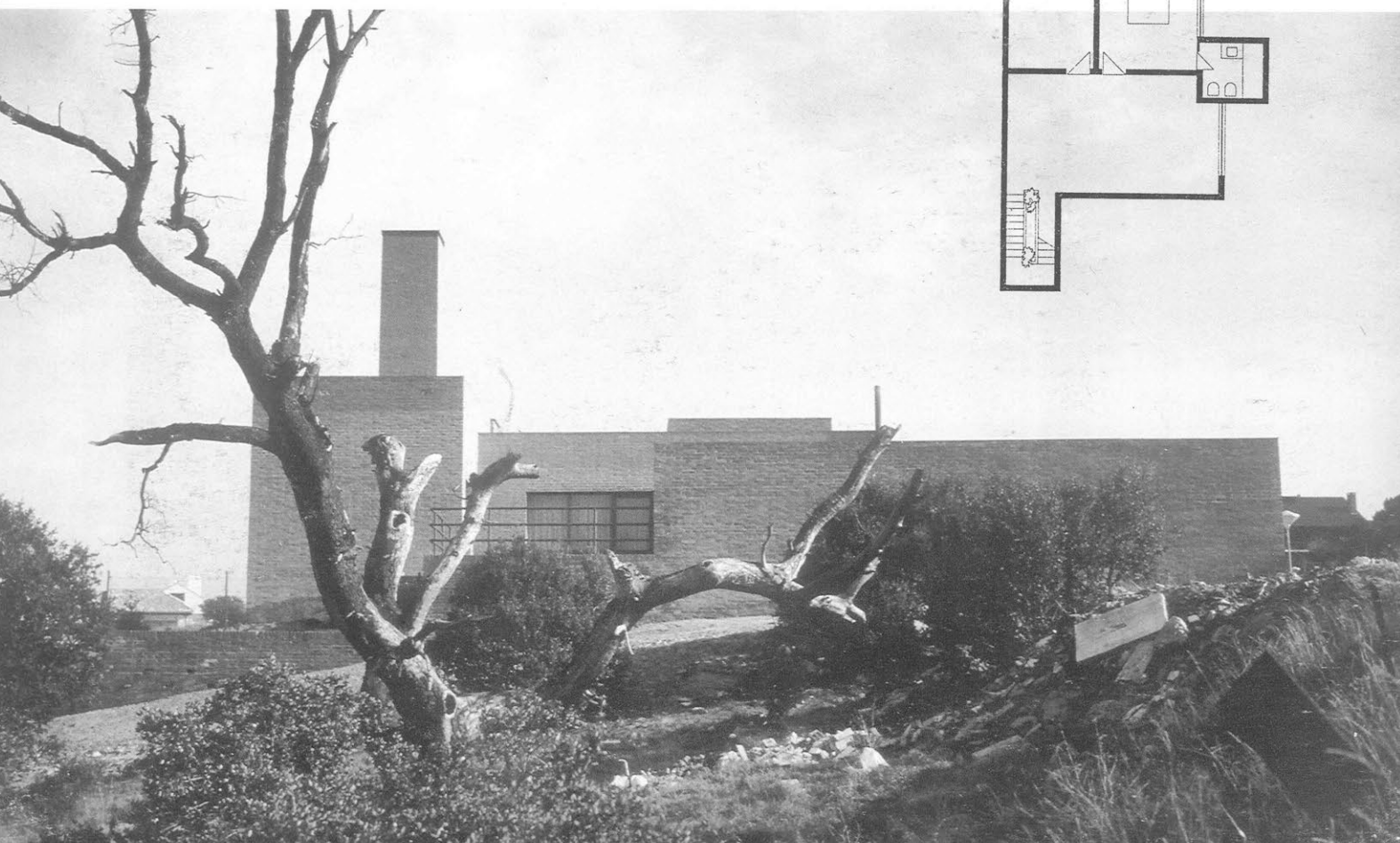
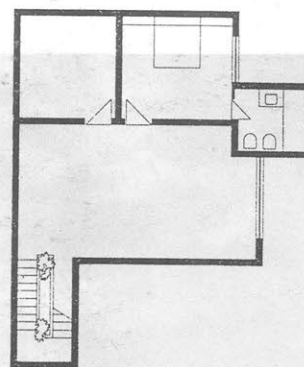
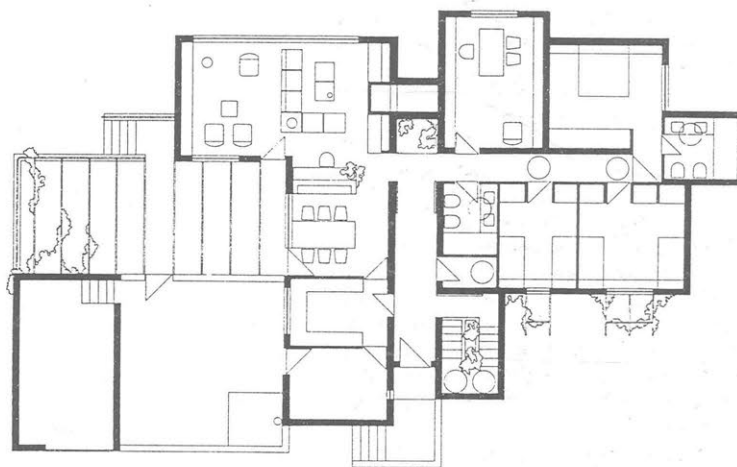


Fominaya House, Ciudad Santo Domingo,
Algete, Madrid, 1974



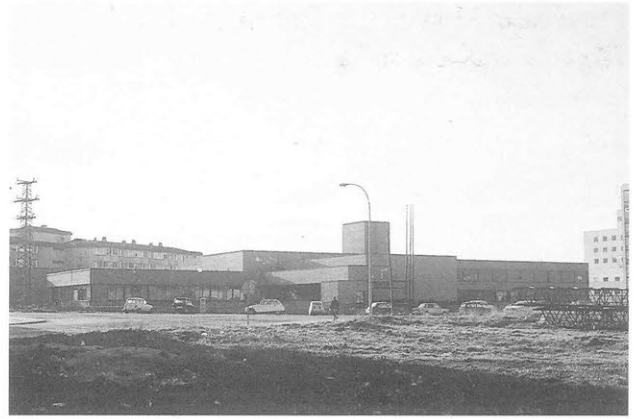
*A side
elevation,
ground-floor
plan and
basement plan*

Dating from the same period as the previous house, the Fominaya House displays greater formal restraint in the brick volumes corresponding to its different functions. The living area, with its large picture window open to the north and a more tranquil and sober patio looking south, already posits the kind of horizontal continuity that will become a feature of subsequent designs. The structure is also simplified here, with brick as the sole material. Inside, the space gradually changes height, producing an interesting interplay of compression and expansion, suitably underscored by the light. There is certain influence of the works of Julio Cano Lasso, with whom the architect was collaborating at the time.



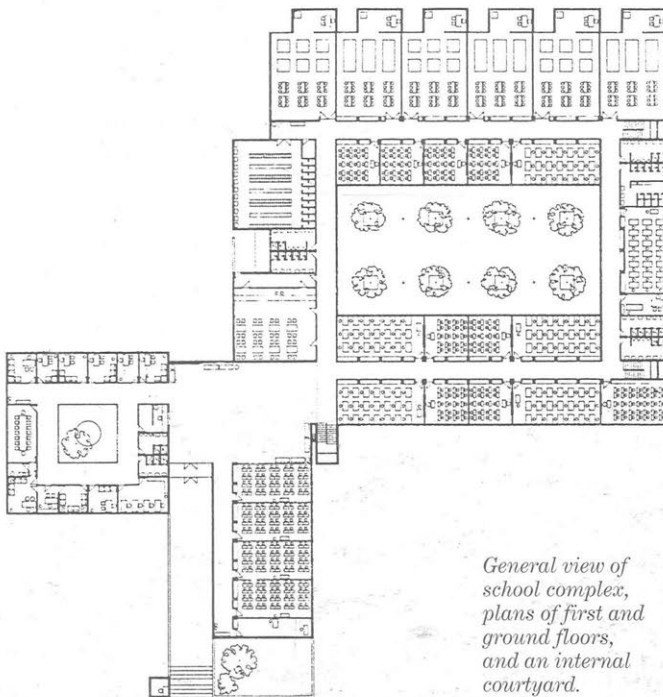
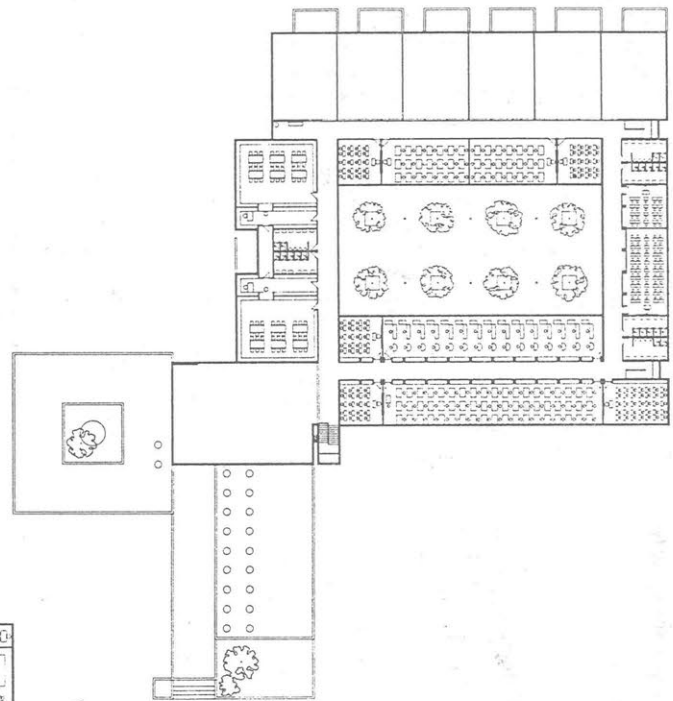
Professional Training Center, Vitoria, 1974

in collaboration with Julio Cano Lasso



The program includes, along with classrooms and offices, semi-industrial workshops. It is based on a linear system of corridors which link up the teaching areas around a rectangular central courtyard. The offices are also organized around a small square courtyard. Both systems converge in the main entrance hall, which accommodates the double height of the two floors of classrooms. Access from outside to this more vertical space is via a more compressed, low-ceilinged porchway. The living quarters and a large storeroom are resolved as independent volumes tautening the open space between them.

Constructionally speaking, the building is of great simplicity, with an exposed metal structure of honeycomb beams which accommodate the services, and main walls of brick, left bare inside and out to help emphasize the feeling of spatial continuity.



*General view of
school complex,
plans of first and
ground floors,
and an internal
courtyard.*

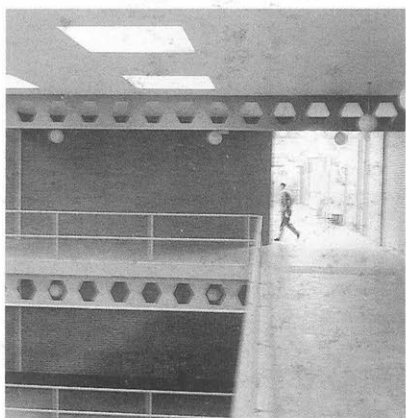
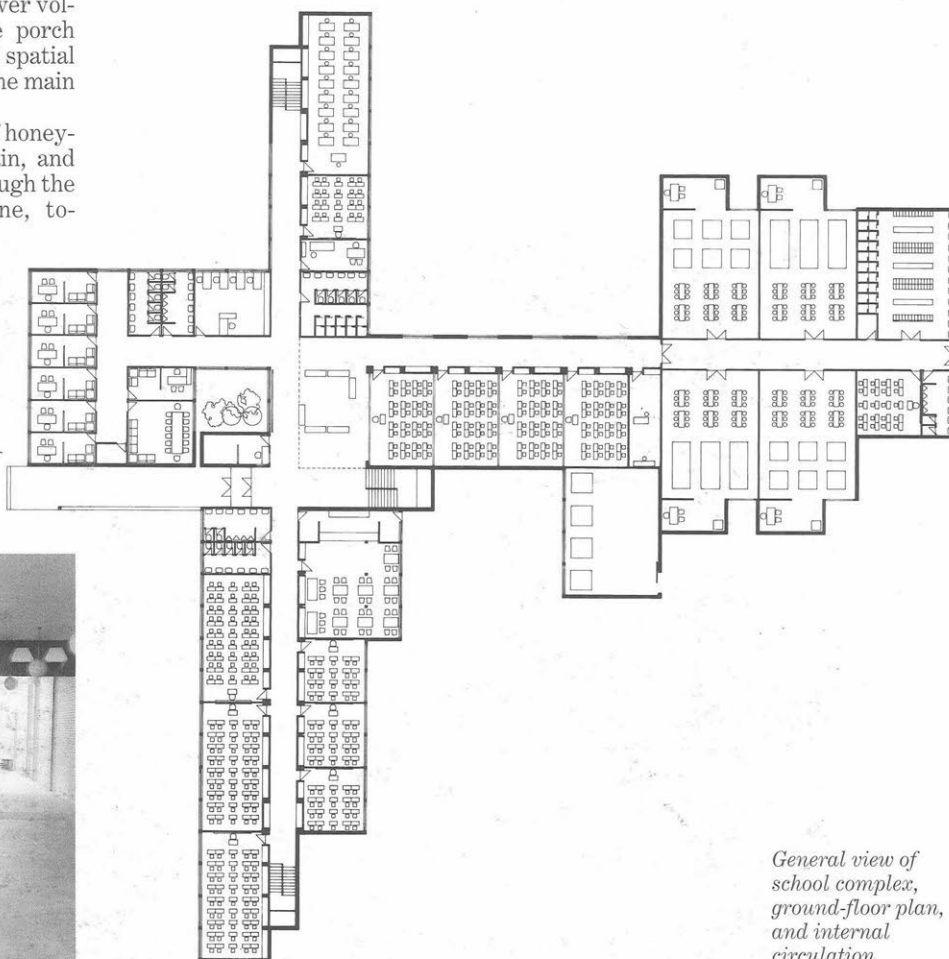


Professional Training Center, Pamplona, 1974

in collaboration with Julio Cano Lasso

Undertaken in parallel with the previous project in Vitoria, and with a similar program, this center was to be built on a three-sided site. The scheme adopted was of two orthogonal axes which converge in the main entrance hall. The longitudinal axis parallel to the road connects up the classroom wing which, taking in the entrance hall, appears as a triple-height screen, its verticality accentuated by the overhead light. The workshop program is organized along the transverse axis. Organized around a square courtyard, the offices are contained in a lower volume onto which the entrance porch abuts, striving for a feeling of spatial compression as one arrives at the main hall.

The exposed metal structure of honeycomb beams is used once again, and these, permanently visible through the classroom transoms, underline, together with the extensive utilization of unrendered brick, the sense of spatial continuity.



General view of school complex, ground-floor plan, and internal circulation.

Professional Training Center, Salamanca, 1975

in collaboration with Julio Cano Lasso

*Aerial view
of school
complex.*

This project, together with Vitoria and Pamplona, completes the cycle of three educational buildings made one after the other. Here, a residence for 120 students is also included.

The extremely long and narrow plot runs parallel to the river in a north-south direction. The layout adopted is the logical, longitudinal one, with the main axis running in that direction. At the northernmost end, the highrise tower of bedrooms, all facing south to-

wards the sun. Facing north, the glass box containing the living areas provides interesting views of the old town of Salamanca below.

The more public spaces are set out in a line along the main axis, ending at the southernmost tip with the workshops. Before reaching these it is crossed at right angles by the classroom wing.

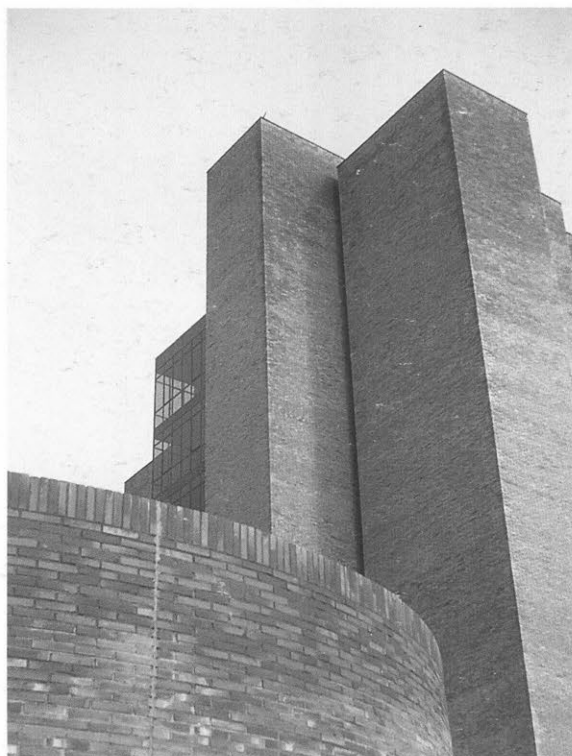
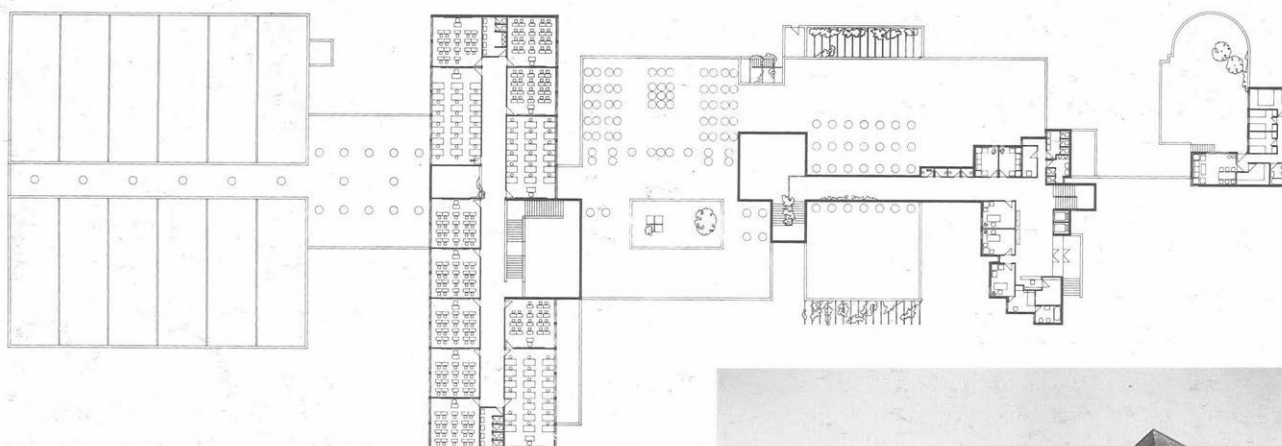
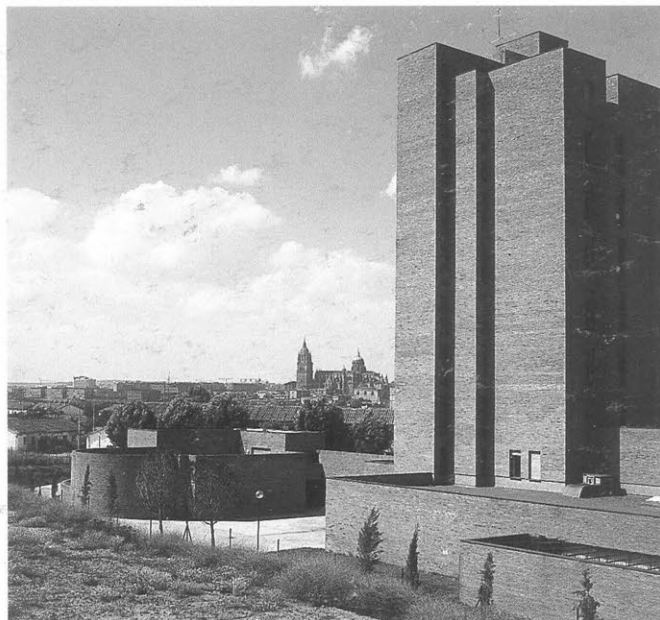
The main entrance hall, plus the three floors of classrooms, are situated at the convergence of the two axes. Its verti-

cal proportions are emphasized by the overhead illumination coming through a reticulated structure in the ceiling that functions as a veritable snare for the light. The beauty of this light-filled space can be appreciated by ascending the main staircase. To get outside one goes along a lengthy and semi-subterranean covered walkway which, given its somewhat shadowy aspect, makes arriving at the brightly lit entrance even more of an experience.



The complex from the south, ground-floor plan, and detail of dormitory tower.

The full-height entrance hall.

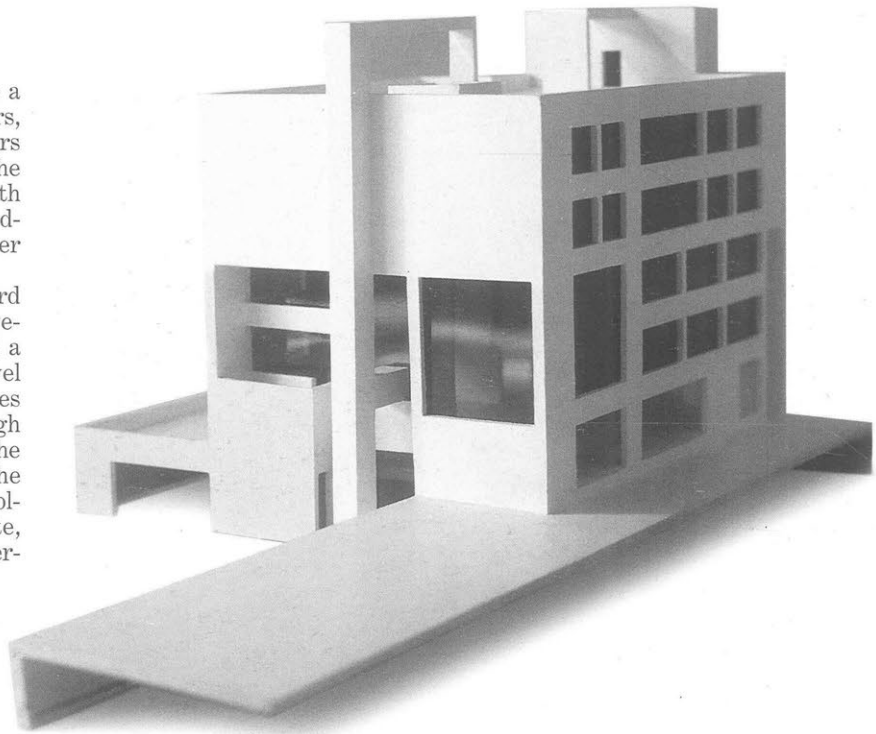




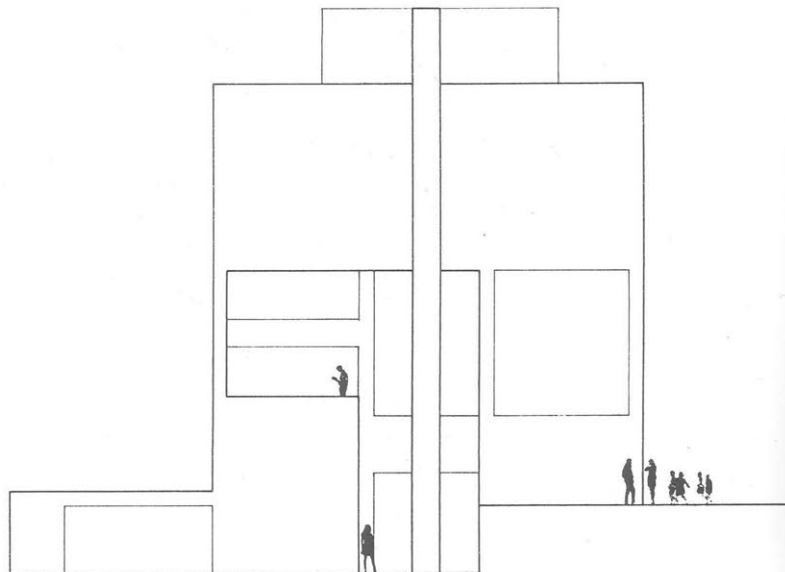
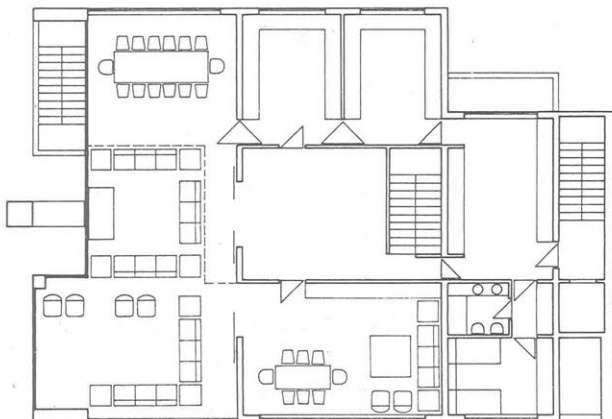
Balseiro House,
Ciudad Lineal, Madrid, 1976

The building was intended to serve a double purpose. Its first two floors, over which the owner's living quarters would extend, was to look out onto the garden, and the top two floors, with more conventional apartments intended for sale, were to have no views over the same garden.

As the terrain has a strong westward slope the basement was built to conveniently emerge at garden level, as a continuation of this. The twin-level space into which the secondary spaces funnel has a garden view through large picture windows which form the main focus of spatial tension. The whole is contained in a single, hollowed-out parallelepiped of white, with the chimney acting as a counterpoint.



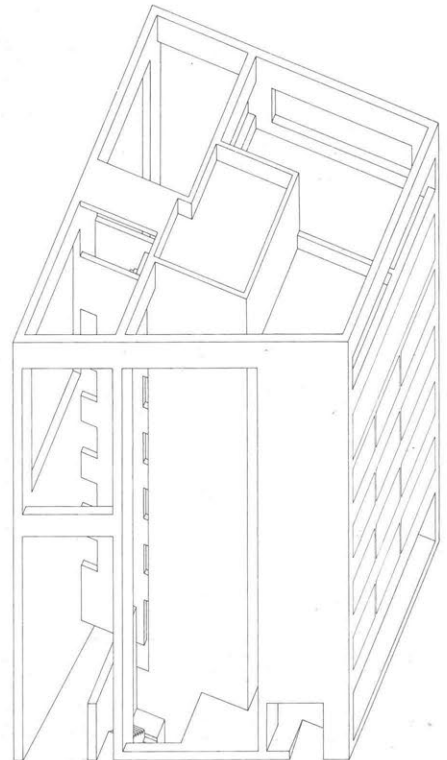
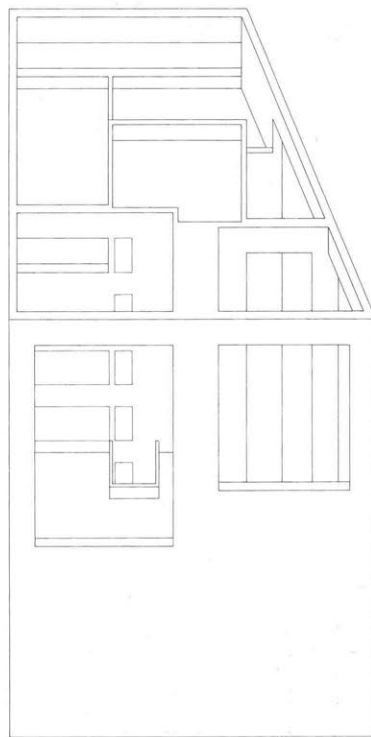
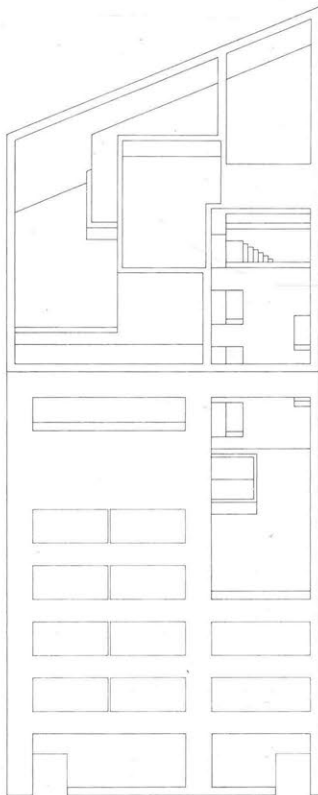
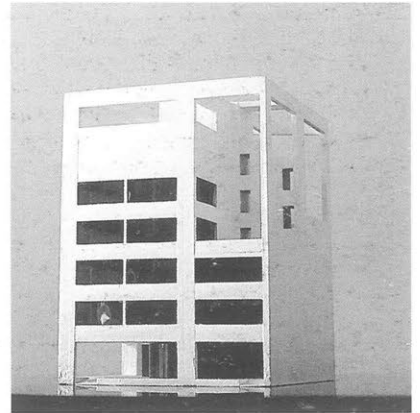
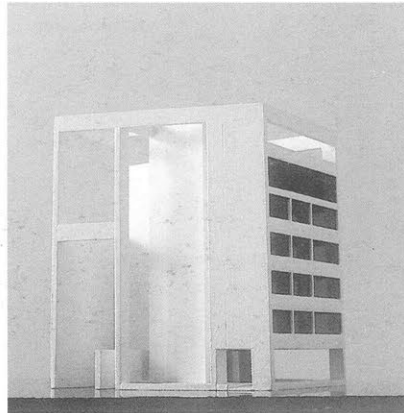
*Model, plan of
piano nobile, and
garden elevation.*



Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos,
Sevilla, 1976

*Model, and
axonometrics
showing the west,
south and east
elevations.*

We opted in this scheme for a white architecture which we conceived as being the most appropriate to the Andalusian city. The entire edifice is subsumed within an overall structure which defines a single volume, elaborating this, emptying it out, in order to comply with the building regulations and to resolve the intensive program proposed. We respond to the city spaces by using different scales. Greater scale for the facade overlooking the plaza and its palm trees which springs up alongside the structure containing the open courtyard. A reduced scale on the street side, with a plain facade of flush windows. Inside, the small-sized building fulfils the extensive program and opens onto the more dramatic spaces, like those of the roof terrace or the more transparent ground floor.



Universidad Laboral, Almería, 1976

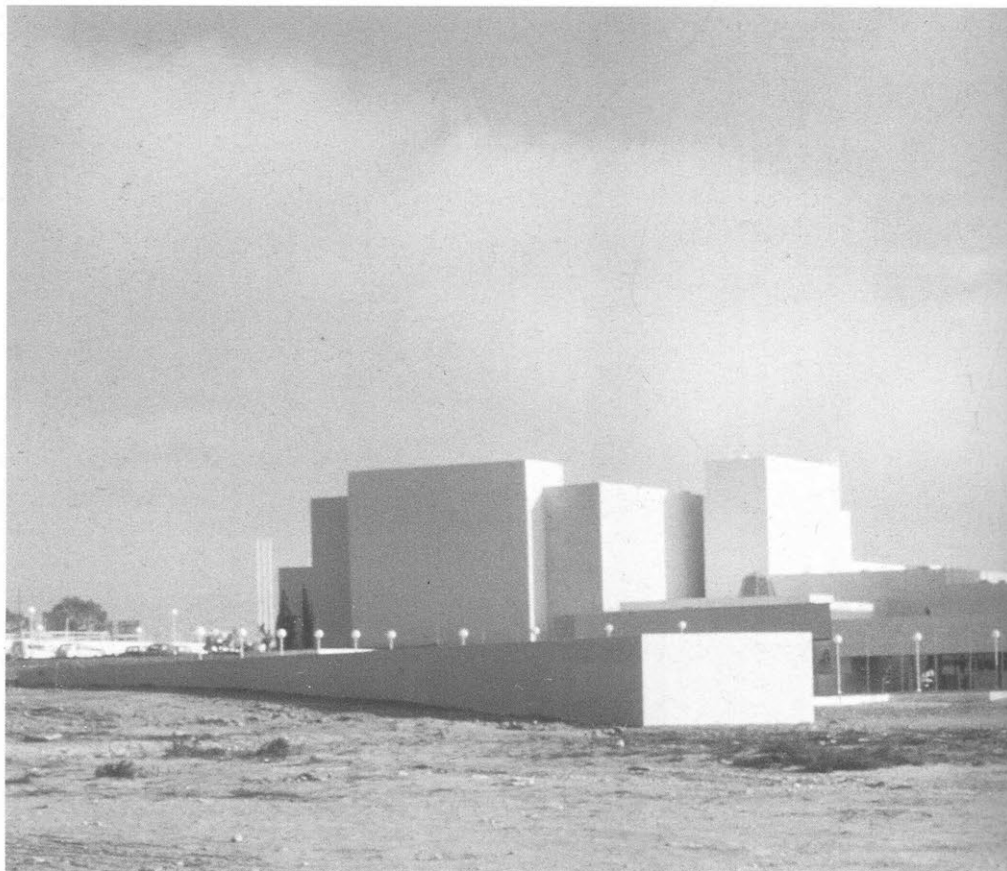
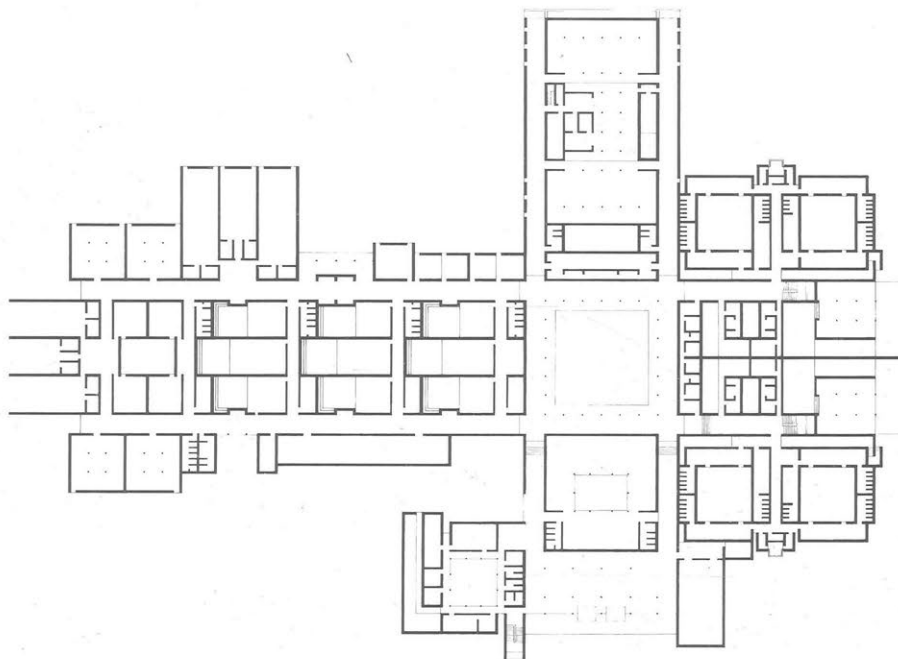
in collaboration with Julio Cano Lasso, Manuel Martín
Escanciano and Antonio Más Guindal

*Ground-floor plan
and general view
of university
complex.*

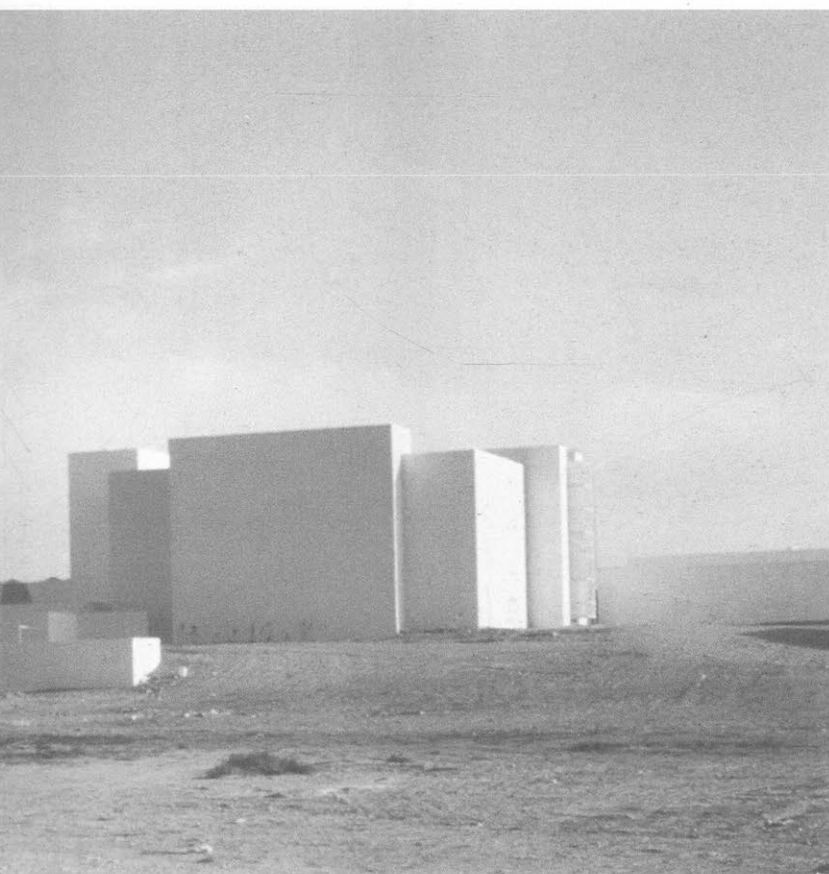
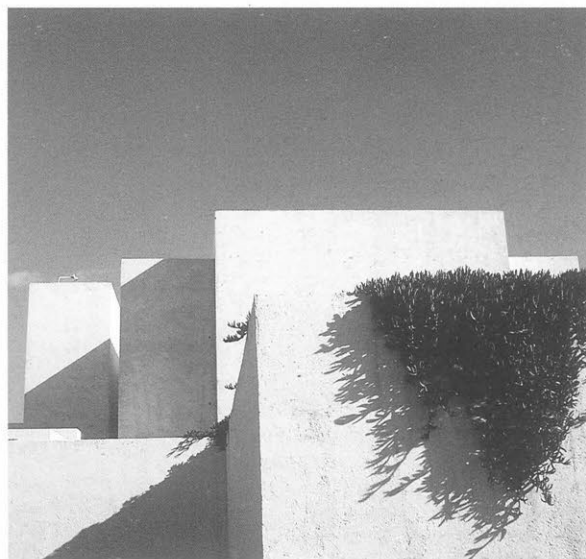
The setting, on an esplanade next to the sea yet without views of it, together with the climate in Almería, would suggest a solution of the 'casbah' type, laid out according to a rational plan. To organize such a complex institutional program a system of streets is established that run into a central square. This network of passageways interconnects classrooms, laboratories and offices to different courtyards, via which the former are lit and ventilated, thus creating a honeycombed organism that is highly efficient and typologically proven for such a climate (the Chanca area of Almería). In some spaces the light sources are accentuated by raised skylights which, protruding from the roof, make for a striking impression.

It was always considered that, with the climate thus controlled, the courtyards would become verdant gardens full of local varieties of plants. Convolvuli, bougainvilleas, jasmine and climbing vines were intended to grow there, thus providing for interior-exterior continuity in the day-to-day life of the building.

From outside the organism seems to be closed off, as if defending itself from external forces. The whole building is of great simplicity, with an orthogonal 4 x 4 m grid laid on top of a highly rational plan, thus allowing for unlimited growth.



*Details of exterior
and one of the
top-lit entrance
halls.*



Cathedral square, Almería, 1978

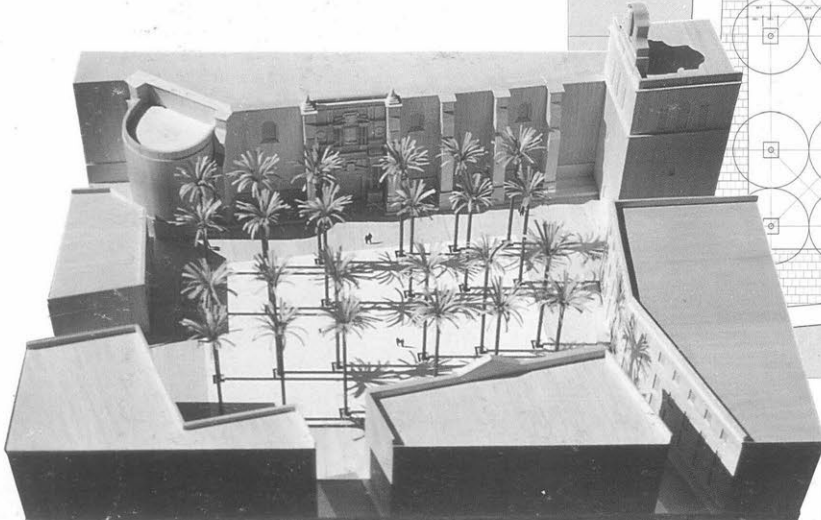
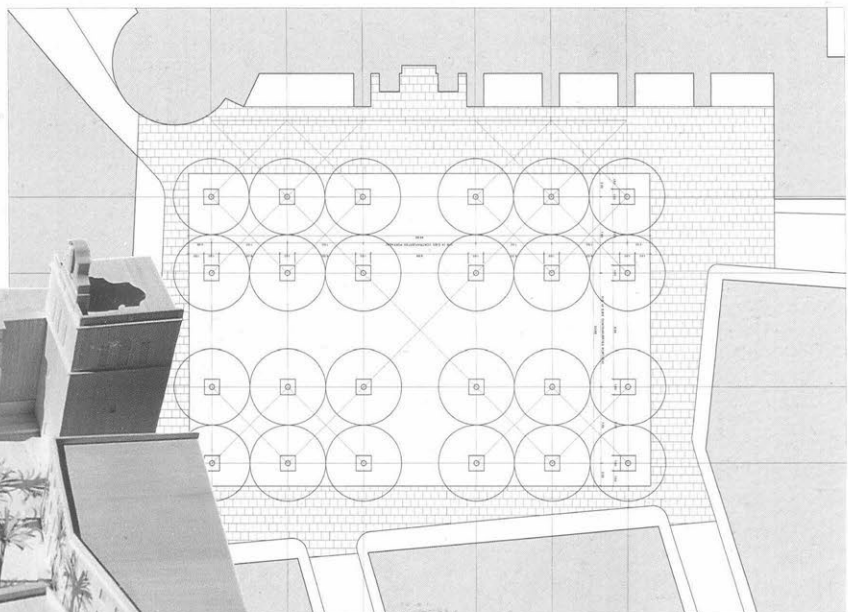
collaborator: Modesto Sánchez Morales

*Detail of Cathedral
square model
showing the rows
of palm-trees;
site plan, and
model from above.*

This design was the winner of a national public competition organized in 1978. The jury pinpointed its main virtues as being its totalizing vision of the problem and its resolution with the maximum economy of means.

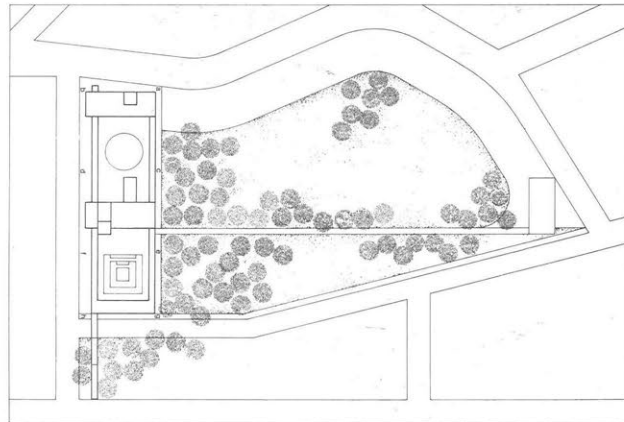
It was a question of reorganizing the Cathedral square in Almería. A straightforward architecture "without architectures" is put forward. The square is paved with white marble from Macael, as are the sidewalks of the city's main streets. Twenty-four palm trees, somewhat taller than the Cathedral, are set in place, and they, like the columns of a lofty church nave, define the space looked over by Juan de Orea's Renaissance facade, as if this were an altarpiece.

We have sought to take the "more with less" idea to its most radical extreme.





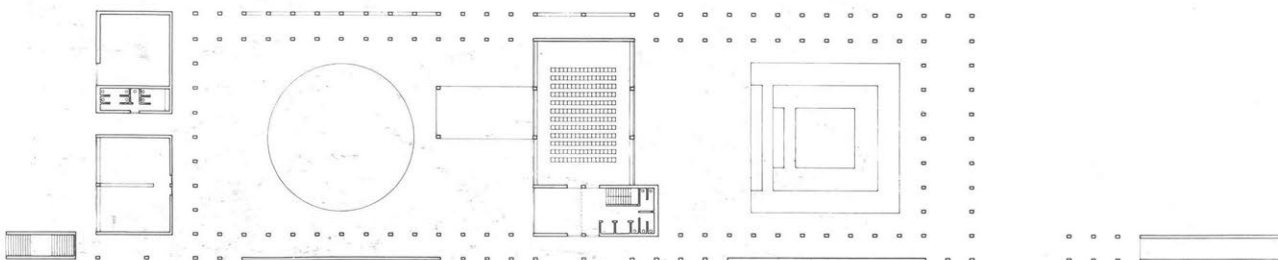
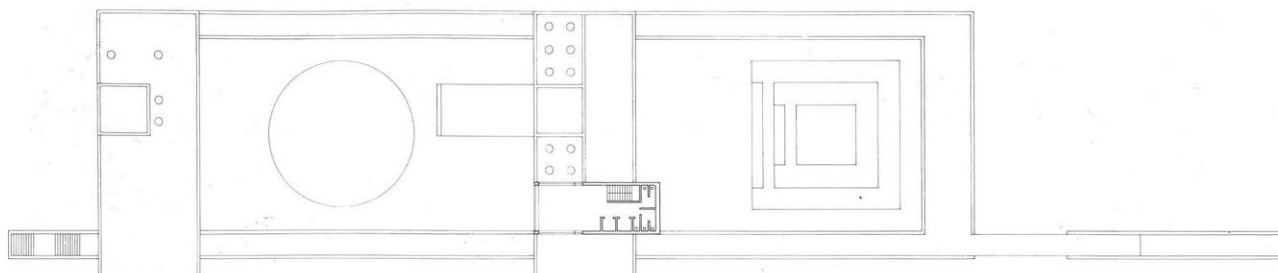
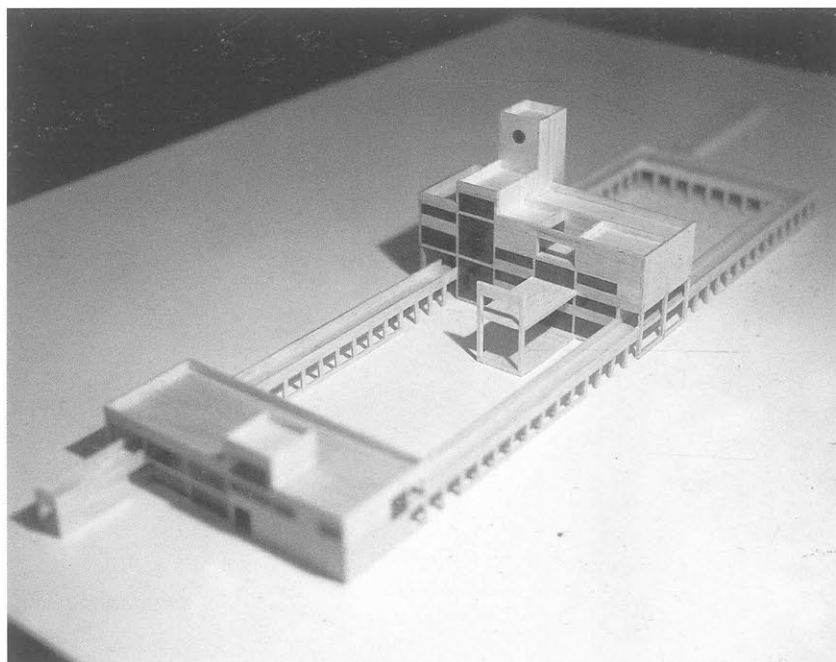
Town Hall, Fene,
La Coruña, 1980

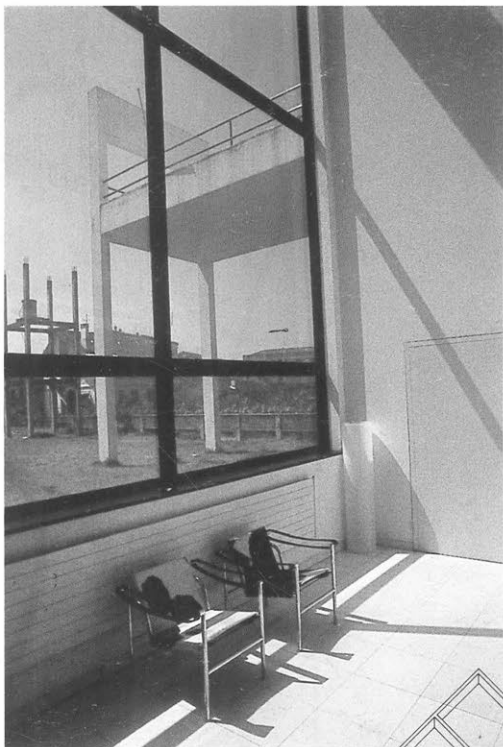


This design won first prize in a nationwide competition organized in 1977. The creation is proposed, in a territory of scattered buildings lacking a consolidated urban fabric, of two squares defined by the various architectural entities that contain the necessary Town Hall services.

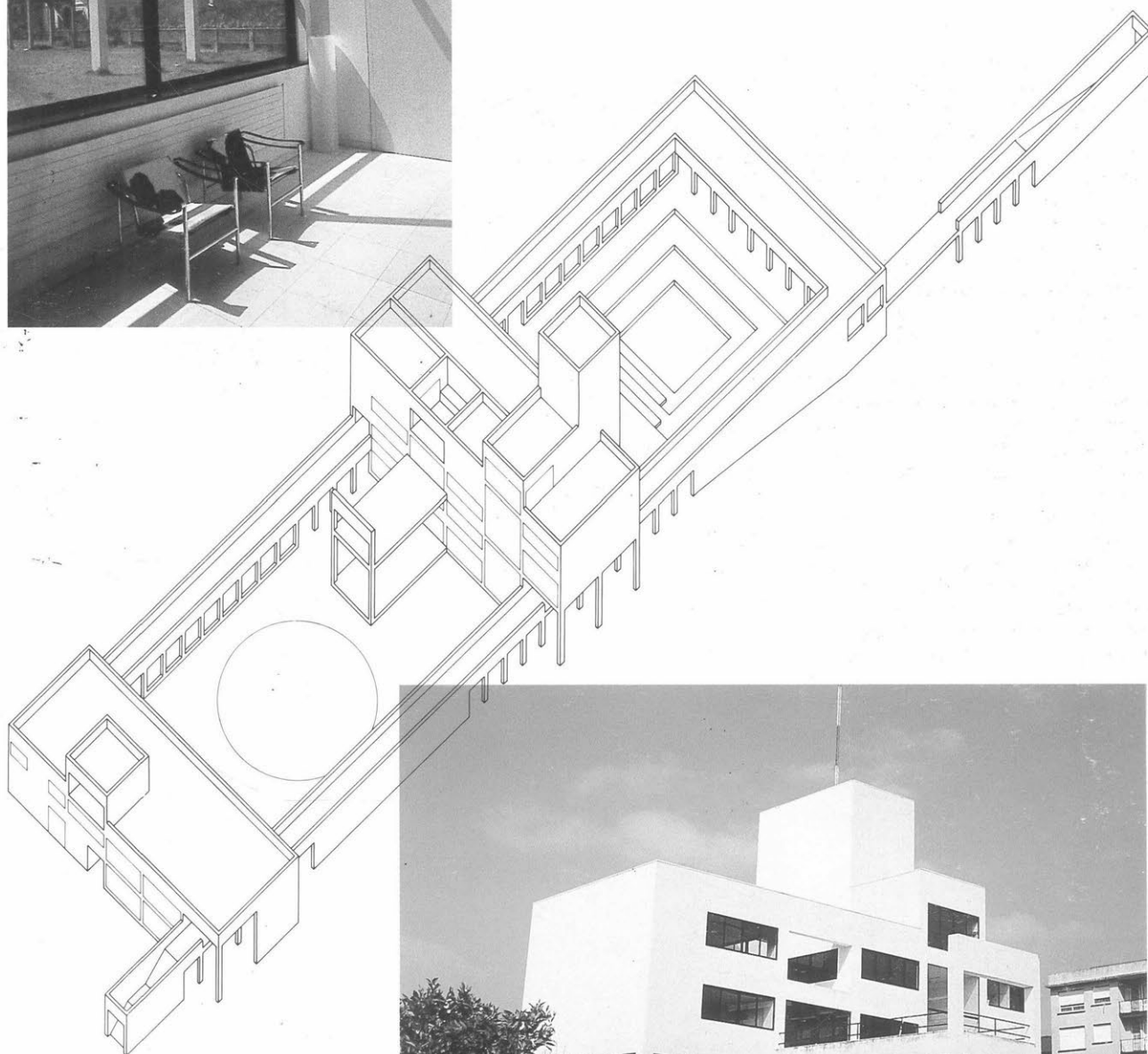
The rectangular site is delimited by three roads and a wood along one of its longer sides. The main building, with its easily recognizable symbolic elements - the 'clocktower' and the 'mayor's balcony' -, is situated in the center, between the two squares. One of these is residential in character, the other cultural. The long sides are edged with colonnades, and the two other entities on the shorter sides house different services.

The central building is extremely transparent, open to the north and somewhat more enclosed to the south. Everything is resolved with the formally restrained and simple white architecture which, along with that built of stone, is common to this part of the country.

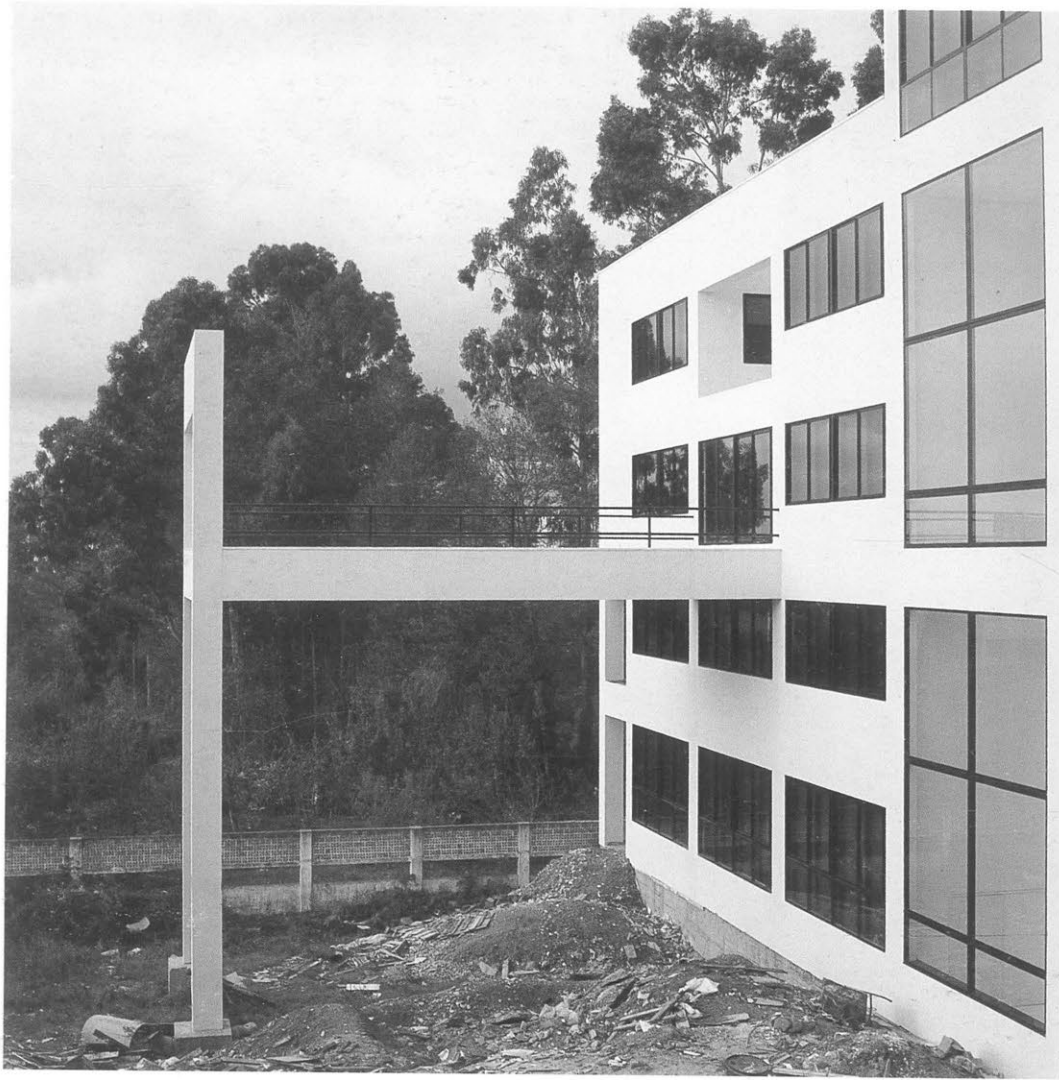




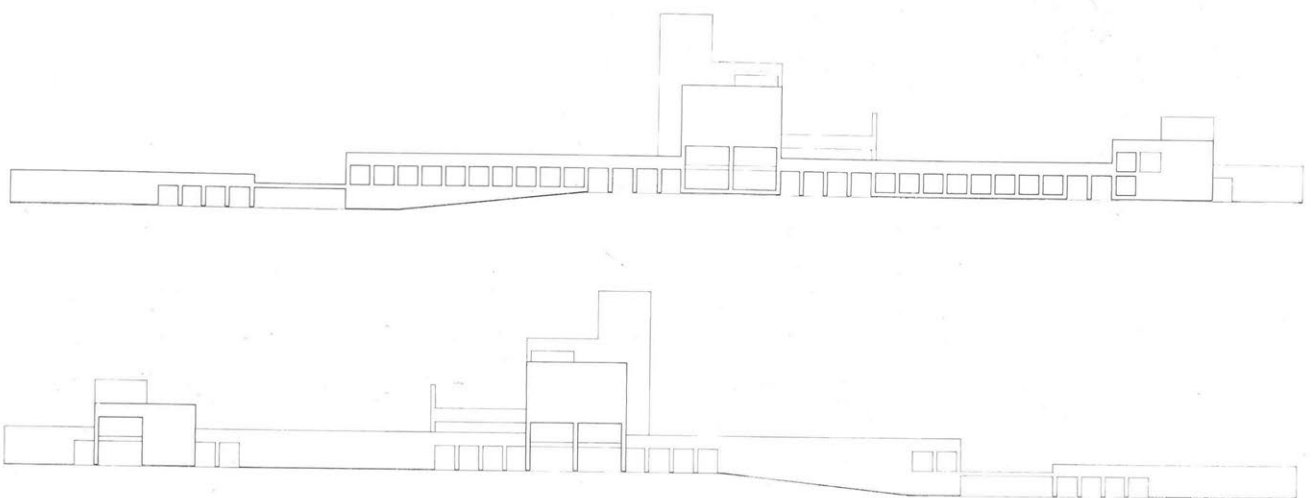
*Interior detail,
general
axonometric, and
view of town hall
showing the clock
tower and the
terrace overlooking
the assembly
courtyard.*



◀ *Site plan, model,
and plans of first
and ground floors.*

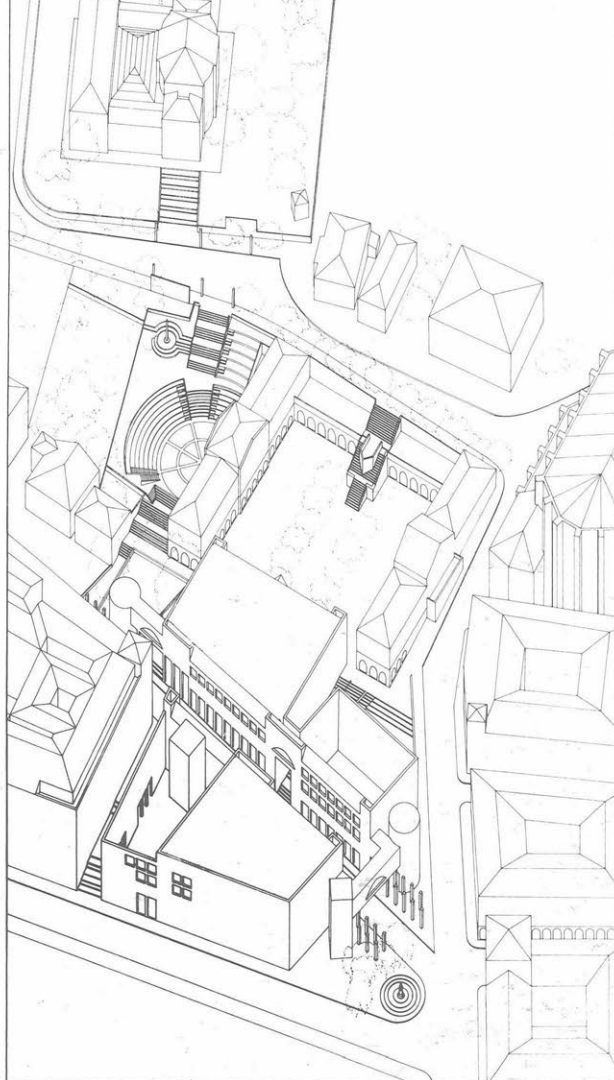


Facade overlooking assembly courtyard, and elevations on road and park.

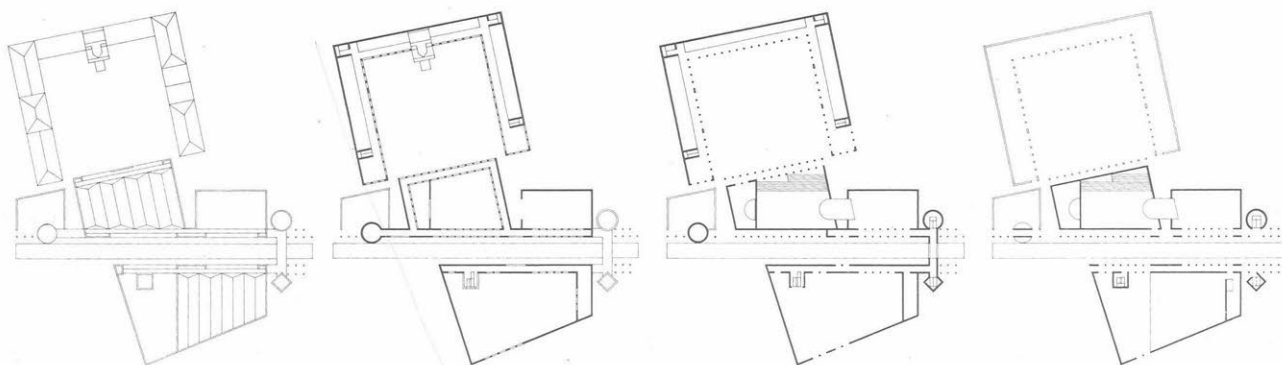
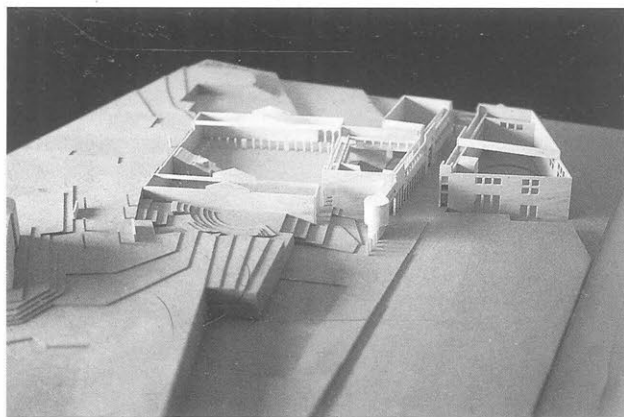


Cultural center, Guernica Vizcaya, 1981

A space was to be created to house Picasso's 'Guernica' in the small town of the same name. It was decided that, instead of creating an isolated building, one ought to intervene by reconstituting the town destroyed by the bombing which inspired this classic work. Three buildings are planned to link the town to Guernica's Casa de Juntas: an auditorium and two courtyards, the first open and the second one closed, with 'Guernica' hung on the rear face of the facade. All the buildings have colonnades, as an extension of those already existing in the old town. And allied to this, the sole material used is stone.

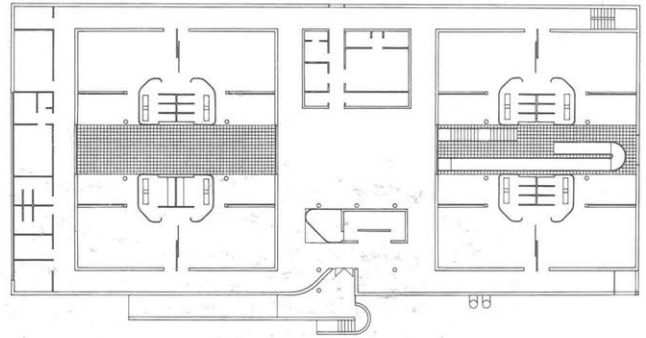


*General
axonometric,
model, and plans
of various levels.*

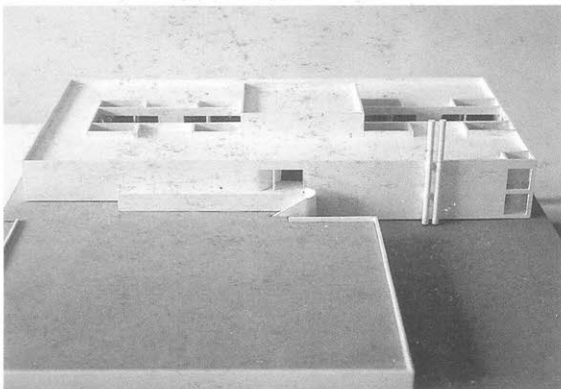
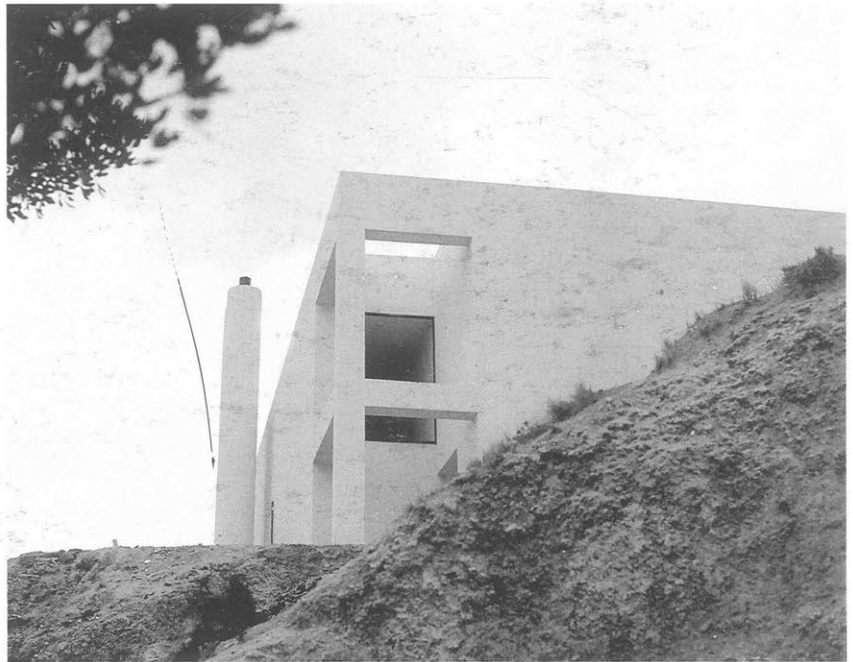


Nursery school, Aspe, Alicante, 1982

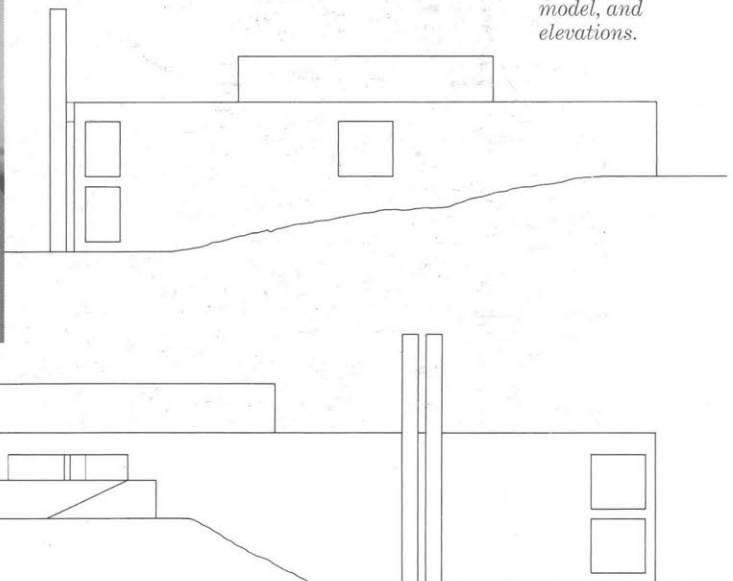
collaborator: Javier Esteban Martín



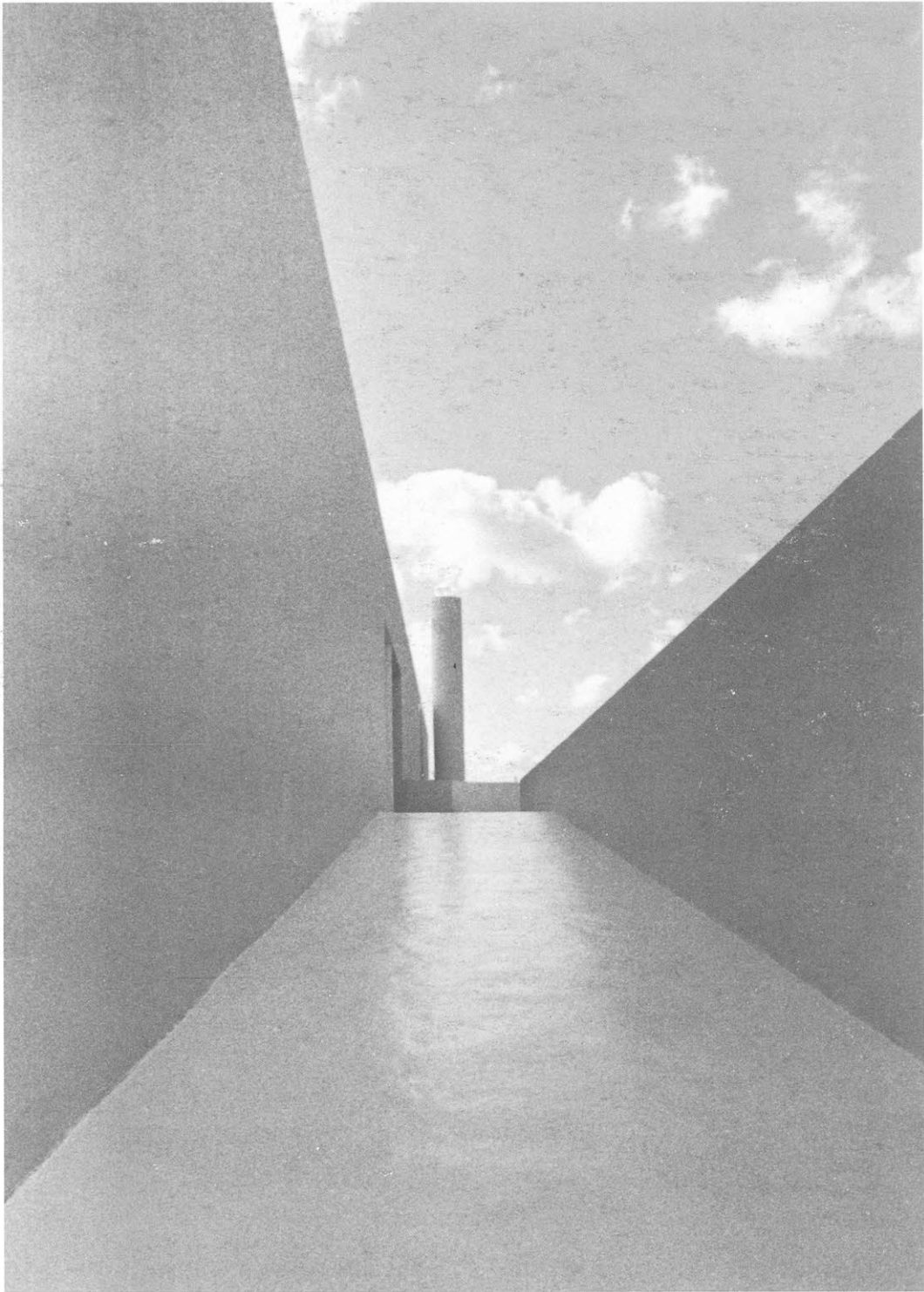
The run-down surroundings and the restricted size of the plot would suggest an inward-facing building, translated here as a white box with well-lit spaces inside it. Compositionally, this is articulated as two patios onto which the classrooms open. One of these accommodates the sloping terrain, to whose lower level one accedes via a set of steps and a ramp which tauten the space in question. Set between every other classroom, the specially adapted toilet facilities for the children are made brighter by exterior walls of glass block. The central space, providing for access and mixed use (the entrance hall, dining room and covered play area), receives horizontal light from the patios and vertical light from the skylights in the ceiling.



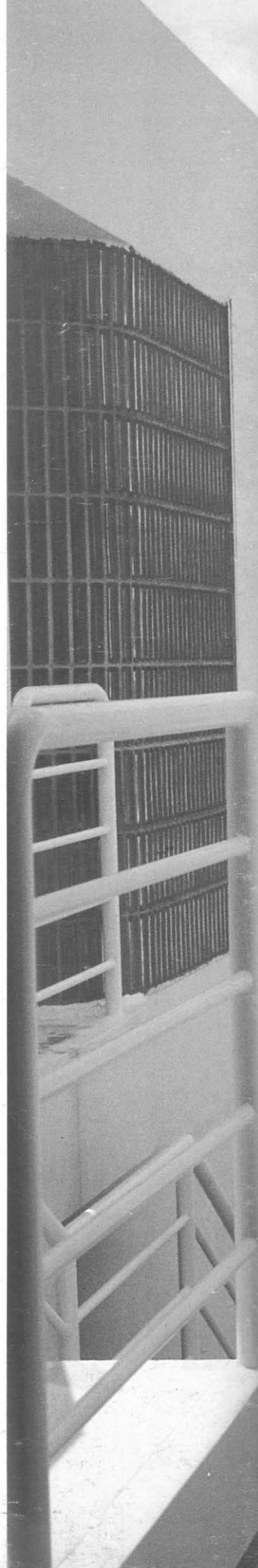
*First-floor plan,
one of the corners,
model, and
elevations.*



The entry ramp.



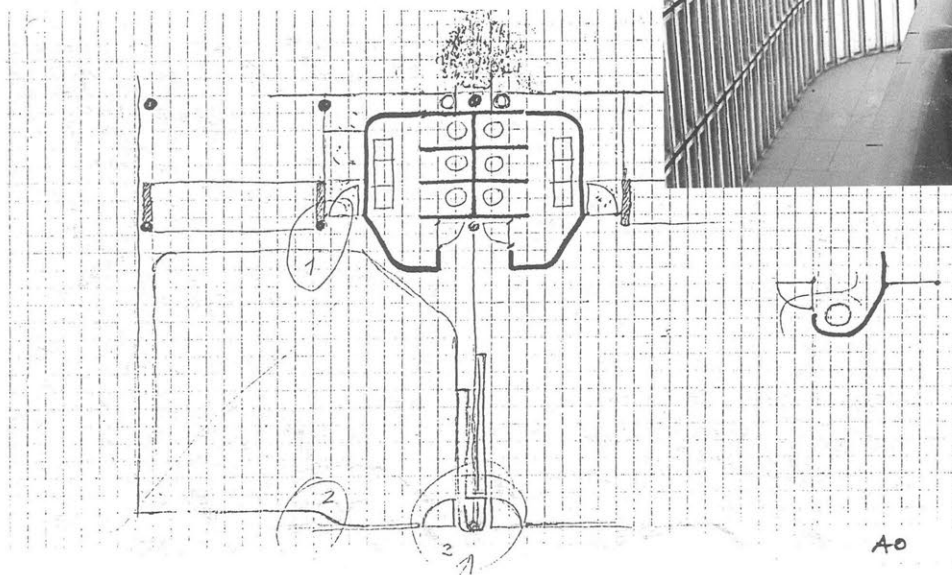
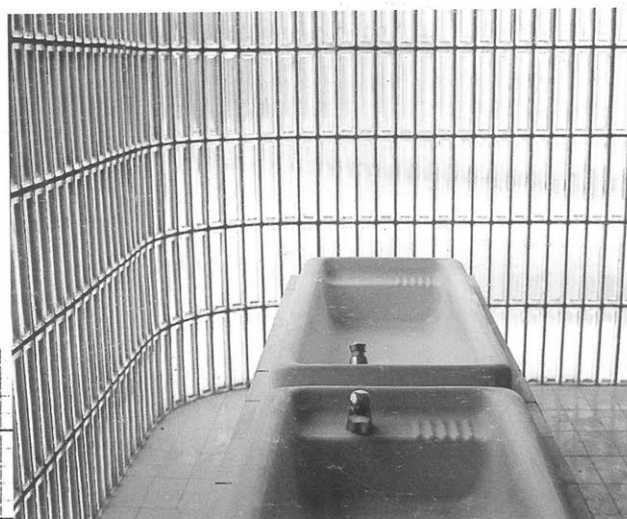
*Details of stairs
and modelling on
one of the internal
facades, and view
of main courtyard.*







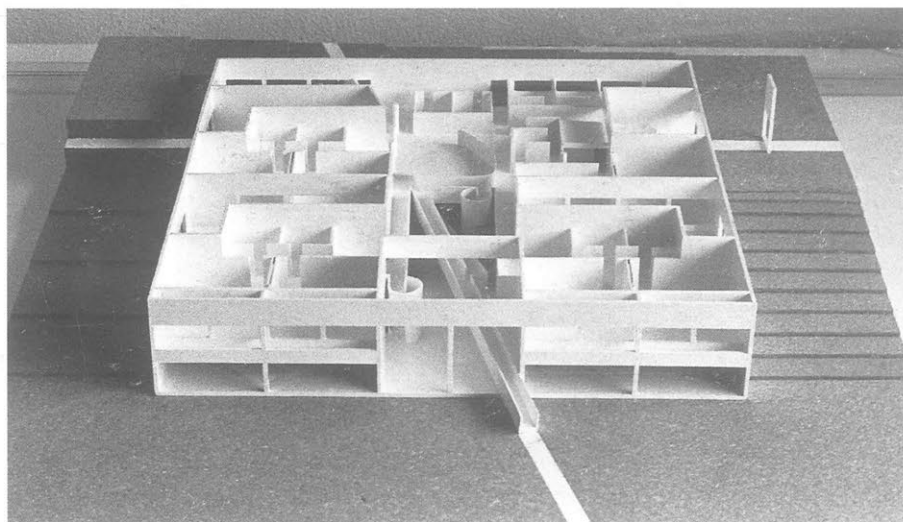
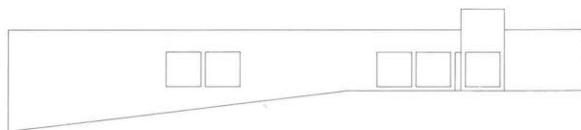
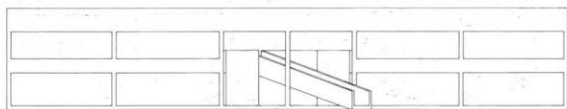
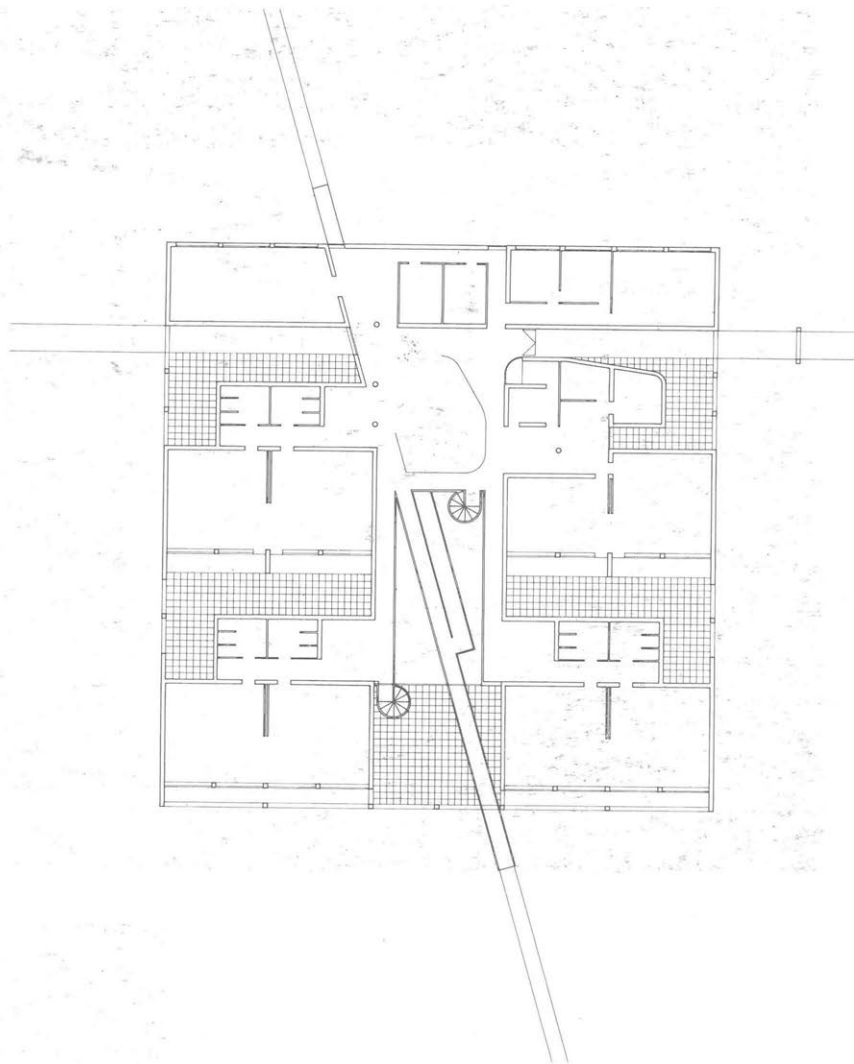
Internal circulation, one of the bathrooms with glass-brick walls, and architect's sketch of service nucleus.



Nursery school, Crevillente, Alicante, 1982

collaborator: Javier Esteban Martín

Closed to the outside, this building appears as a white prism, square of base, which defends itself from the run-down surroundings. The steeply sloping plot has a garden on its lower side. Successive patios are joined up to either side of a main central space. The latter is double-height, in order to be able to open onto the garden. Access is gained via a ramp which, with its diagonal layout, becomes that space's main feature. The right correspondence is thereby established between the interior understanding of the building, with its large single space, and the exterior, compact and taut, which suggests a similar sense of unity. Various strategically placed skylights lend a tautness to said space, with light once more the main concern here.



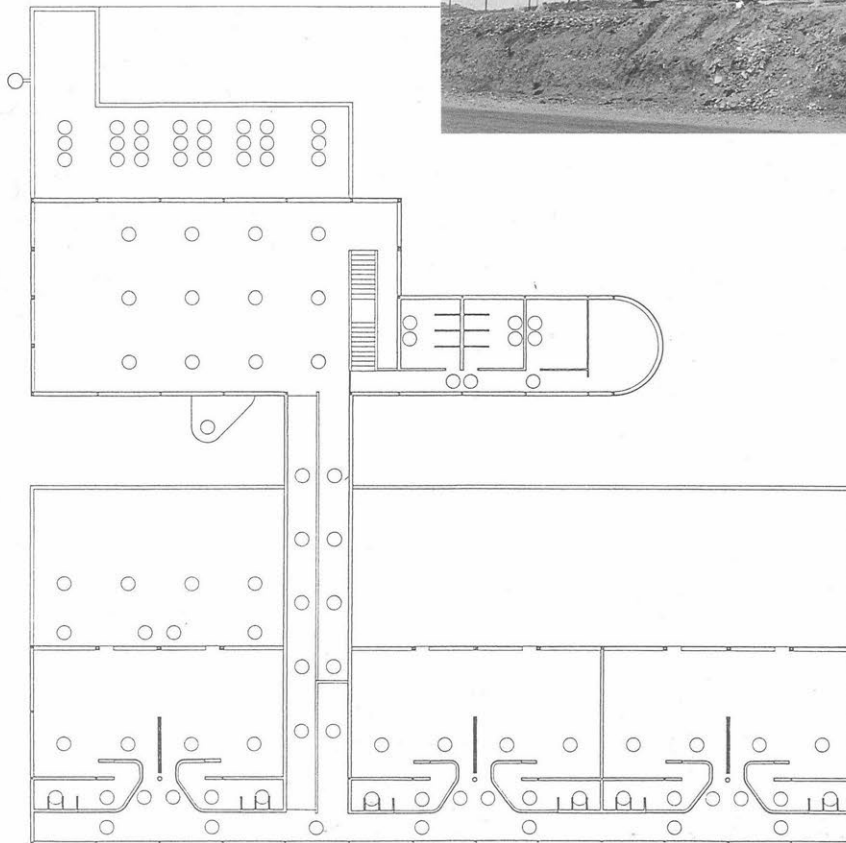
*First-floor plan,
entrance and side
elevations, and
open model.*

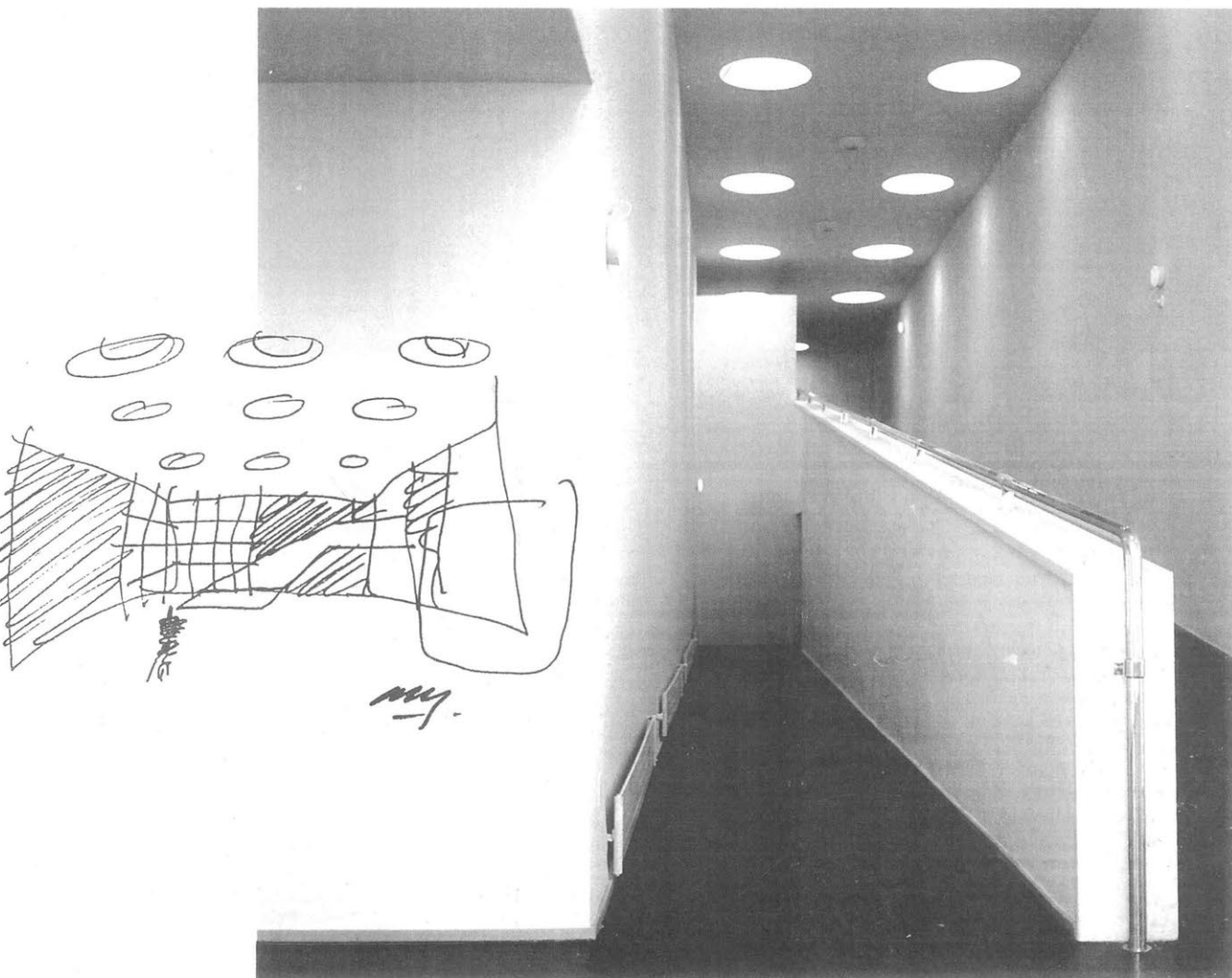
Nursery school, Onil, Alicante, 1982

collaborator: Javier Esteban Martín

One of the corners, and ground-floor plan.

The somewhat fragmentary floorplan is a consequence of adapting the stipulated program to the uneven topography of the plot. Laid out linearly, the classrooms are situated in the upper part of the building, with each classroom having an east-facing terrace connected to it to catch the morning sun. A single ramp connects this area to the lower floor, which contains the multi-purpose space through which one enters the building. This general space, with its extended floor area and double height, has huge windows that look north onto an adjoining wood. Similar windows in the opposite corner, where the access stairs to the Administration area are, receive direct light from the south.





*Internal
circulation ramp,
a classroom
entrance, and
architect's sketch
of full-height
entrance hall.*

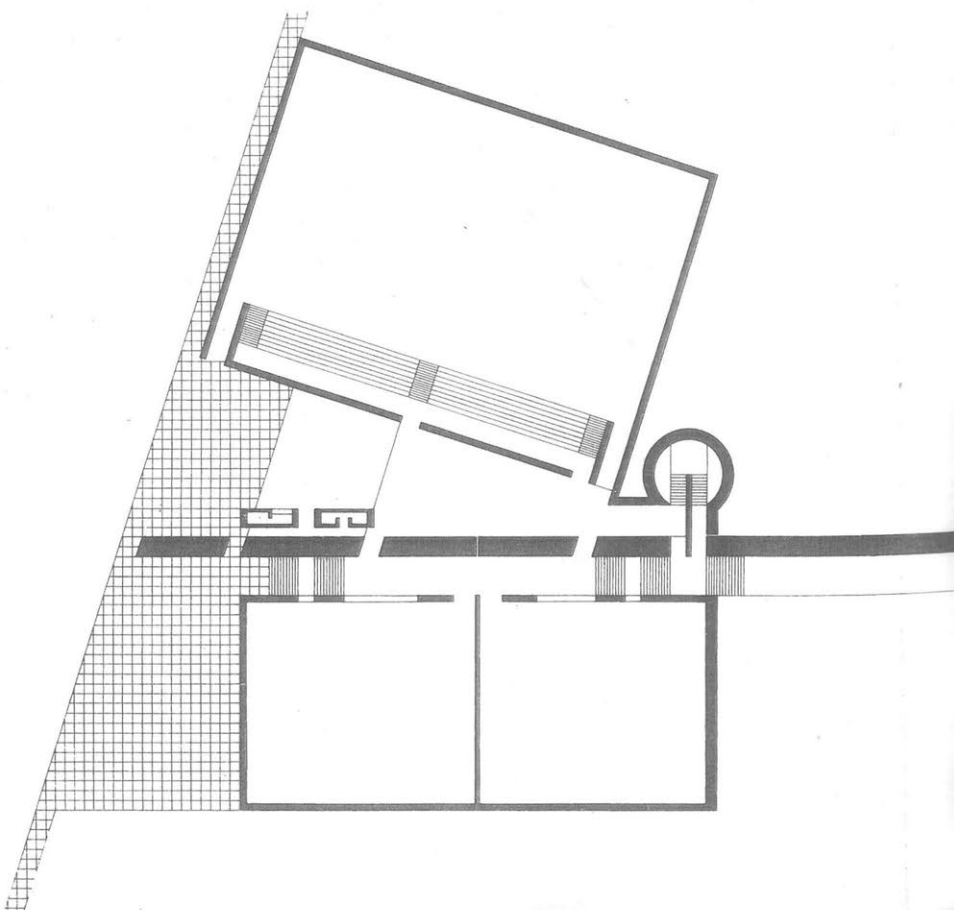
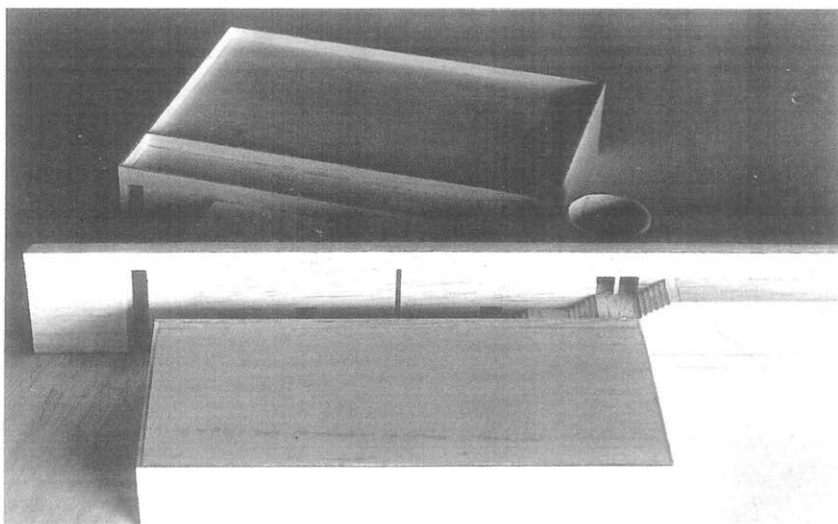
Gymnasium,
Ciudad Universitaria, Madrid, 1982

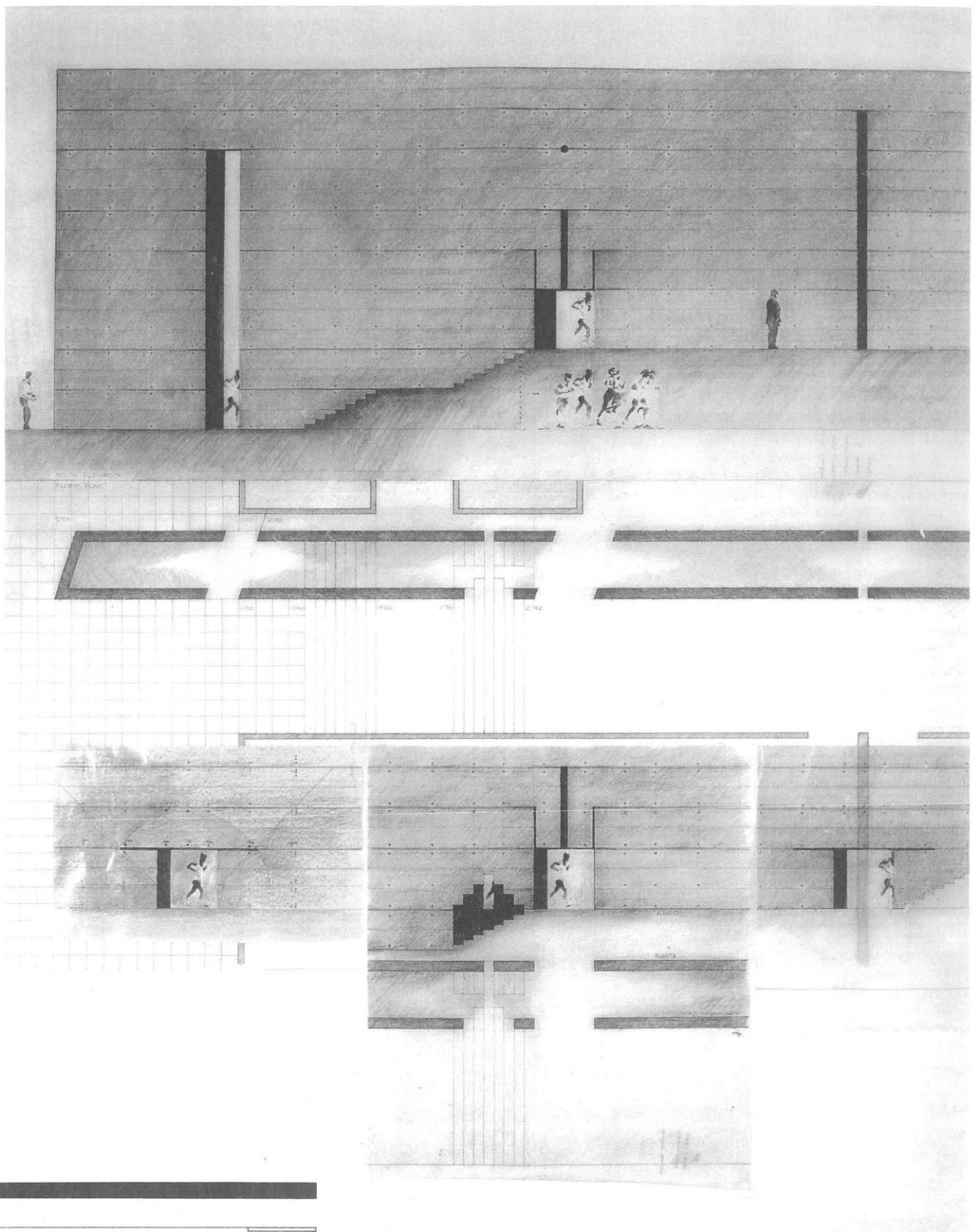
*Model and ground-
floor plan.*

*Study drawing
of wall, elevation
and part of plan.*

This building won first prize in a competition held between the teaching architects of the Escuela de Arquitectura de Madrid to construct a sports complex in the grounds of the latter.

The basic idea was to take advantage of the strongly sloping terrain and to embed the two boxes containing the necessary facilities: the large sports hall, which is resolved with overhead light, and the gymnasium. Manifesting itself as two inhabitable, horizontal planes looking west towards the splendid vista of Madrid, the mass of the building thereby disappeared. The complex was articulated by a colossal transverse wall of concrete which began by containing the adjacent terrain and ended up, through maintaining the consistency of the line of its cornice, as the main reference point. The stairway which both unites and traverses the various levels is supported on this. Running north-south and suitably pierced, the wall provides for a variety of lighting effects which cause the space thus created to vibrate.



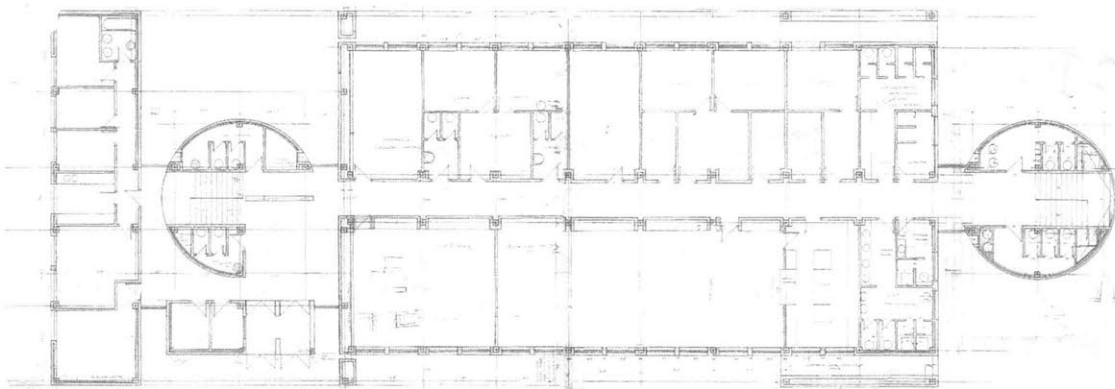
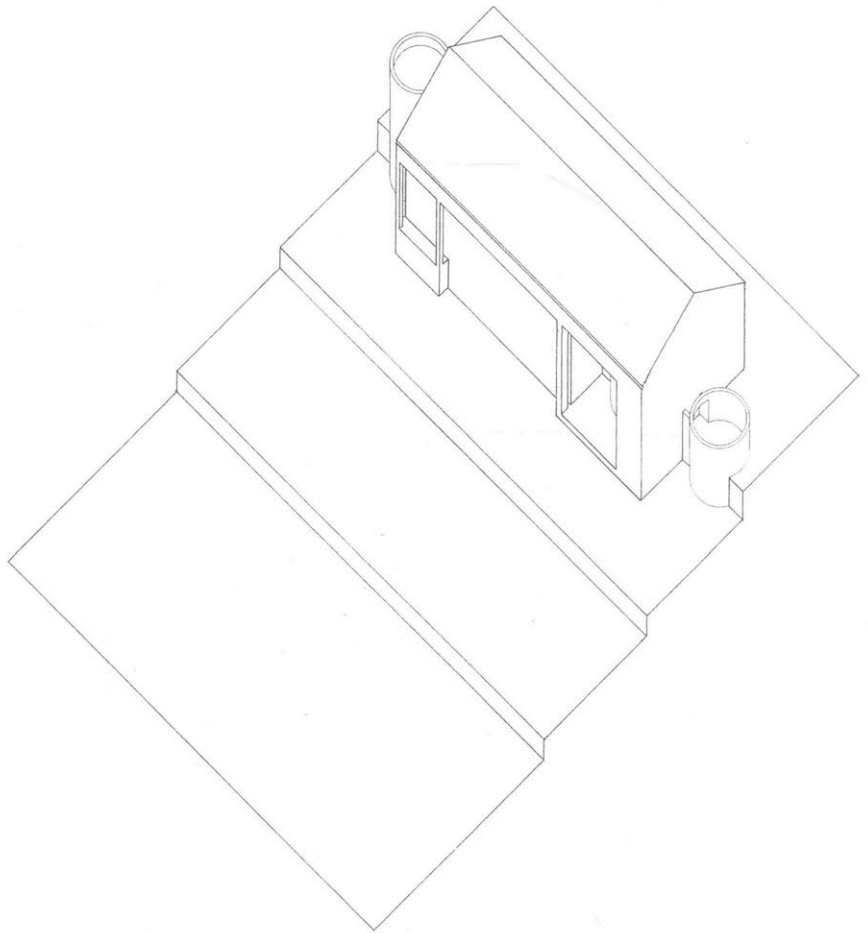


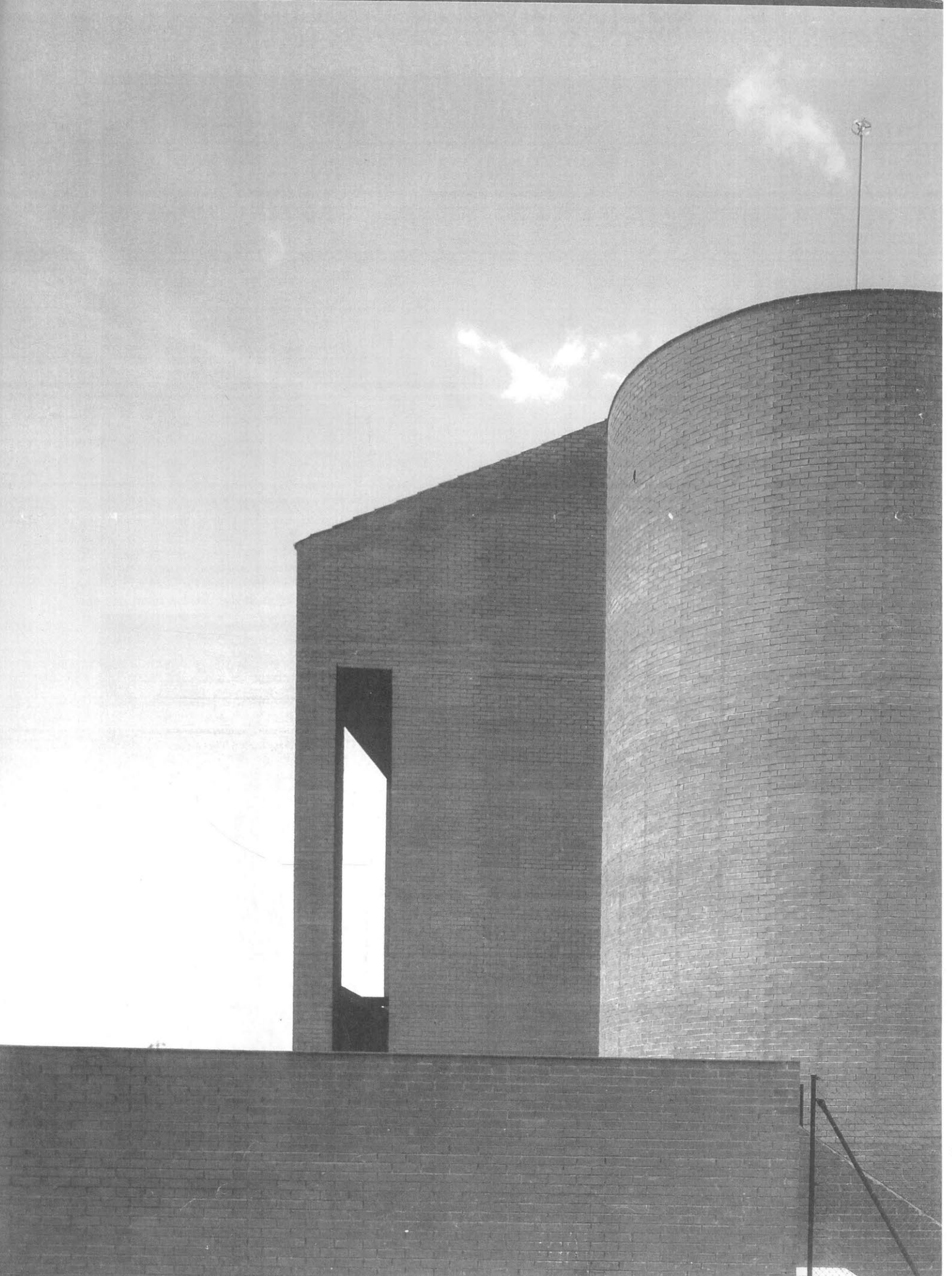
Public school,
San Sebastián de los Reyes, Madrid, 1983

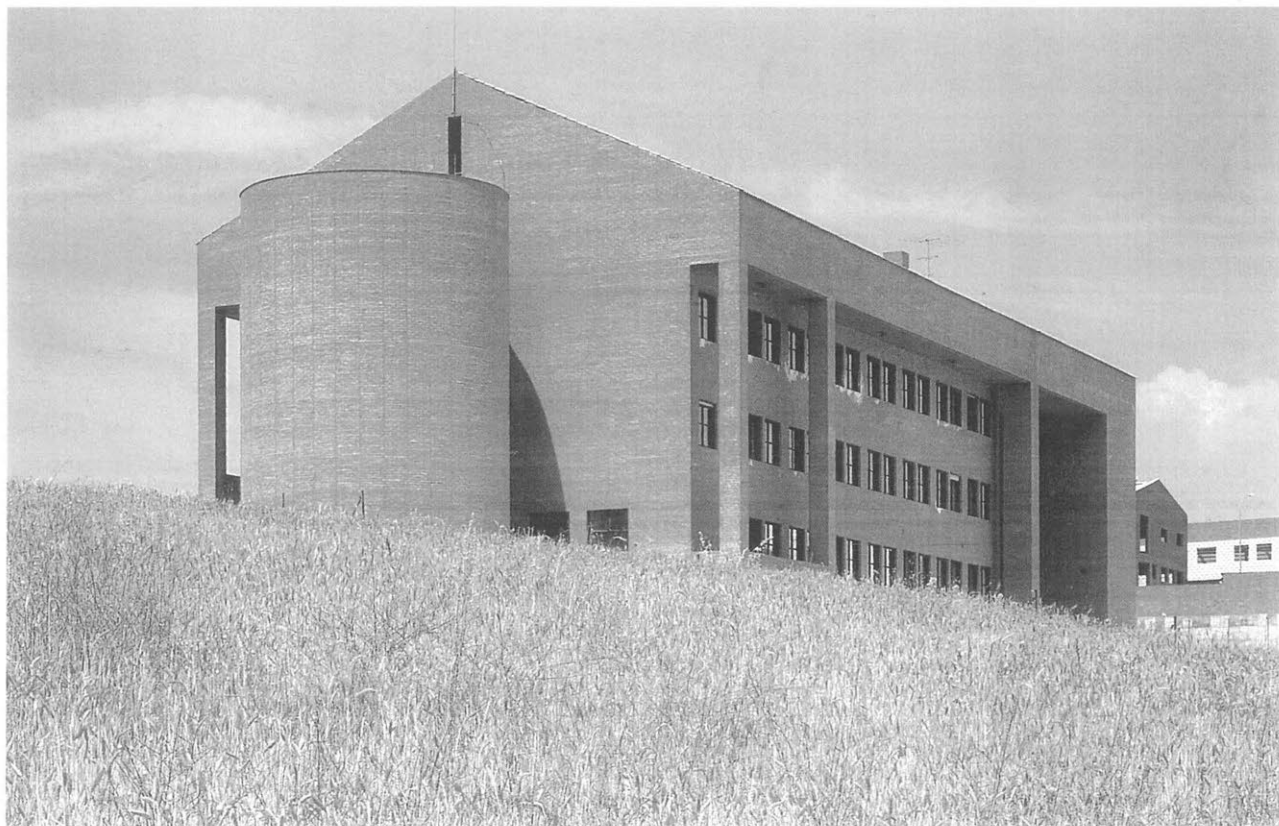
*Axonomic,
ground-floor plan
with special
classroom and
porter's lodge (left),
and detail of south
elevation.*

Situated on the outskirts of the conurbation, as the final building in a semi-industrial area, and high up on a hill, the building was designed as a sort of conclusion to the collection of existing buildings. The use of a sloping roof and the utmost economy imposed by the property are resolved in an immensely compact building, which emerges like a liner on the sea of sown fields surrounding it. The image is strong and easily recognizable.

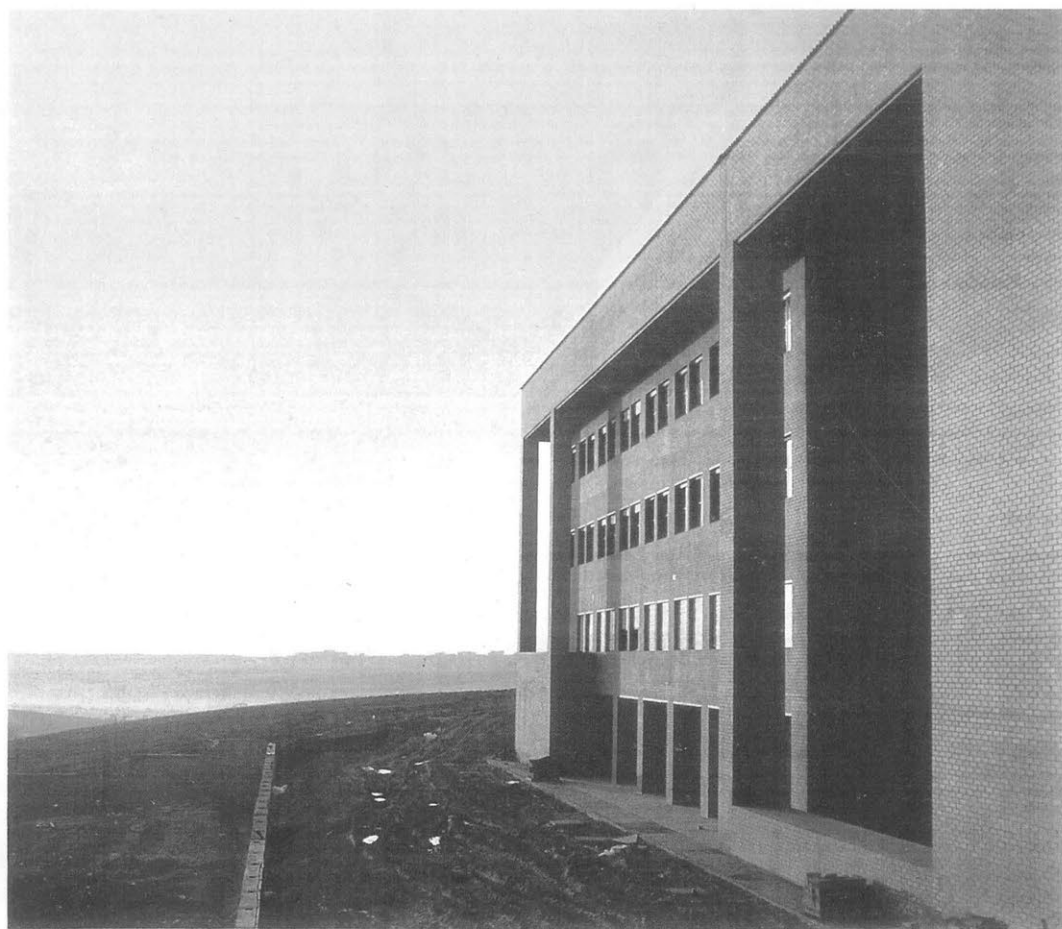
Its functional layout is the habitual one of a corridor running east-west with classrooms on either side, terminating to the north in a transverse block of laboratories. The staircases and services at the ends are housed in cylinders which, given their rounded form, tauten the main volume and help to underline its presence. The strong slope existing above the east facade is made over into an area of changing rooms and porches which open onto the play area. This means that the facade is four stories high, a fact which accentuates the forceful volumetry of the building.



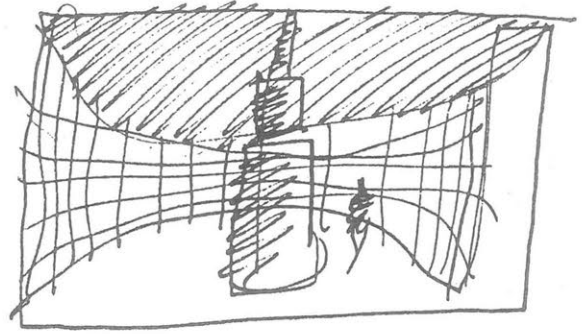




*The school from
the southeast,
and the east
elevation with
portico.*

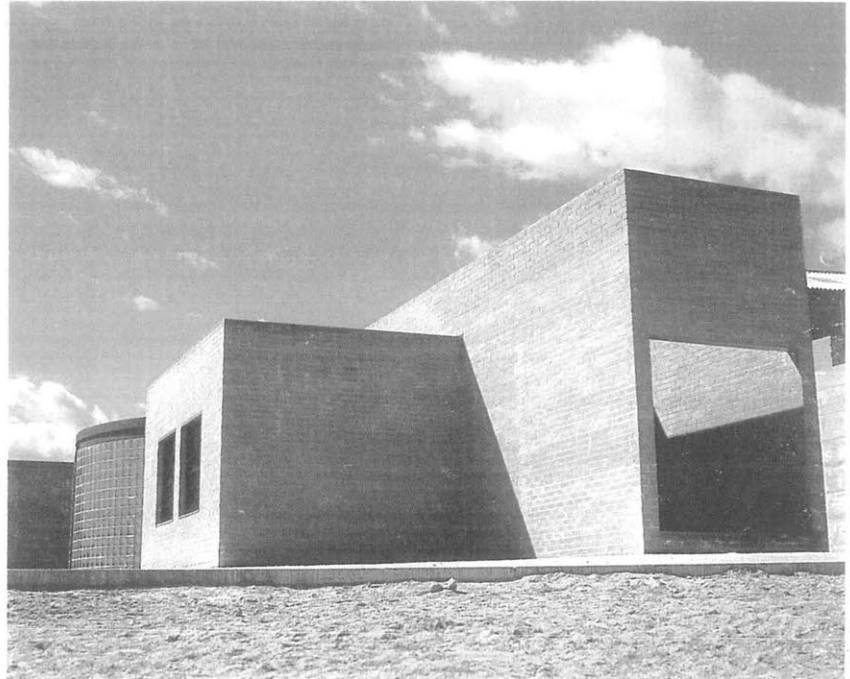


Nursery school, San Sebastián de los Reyes,
Madrid, 1984

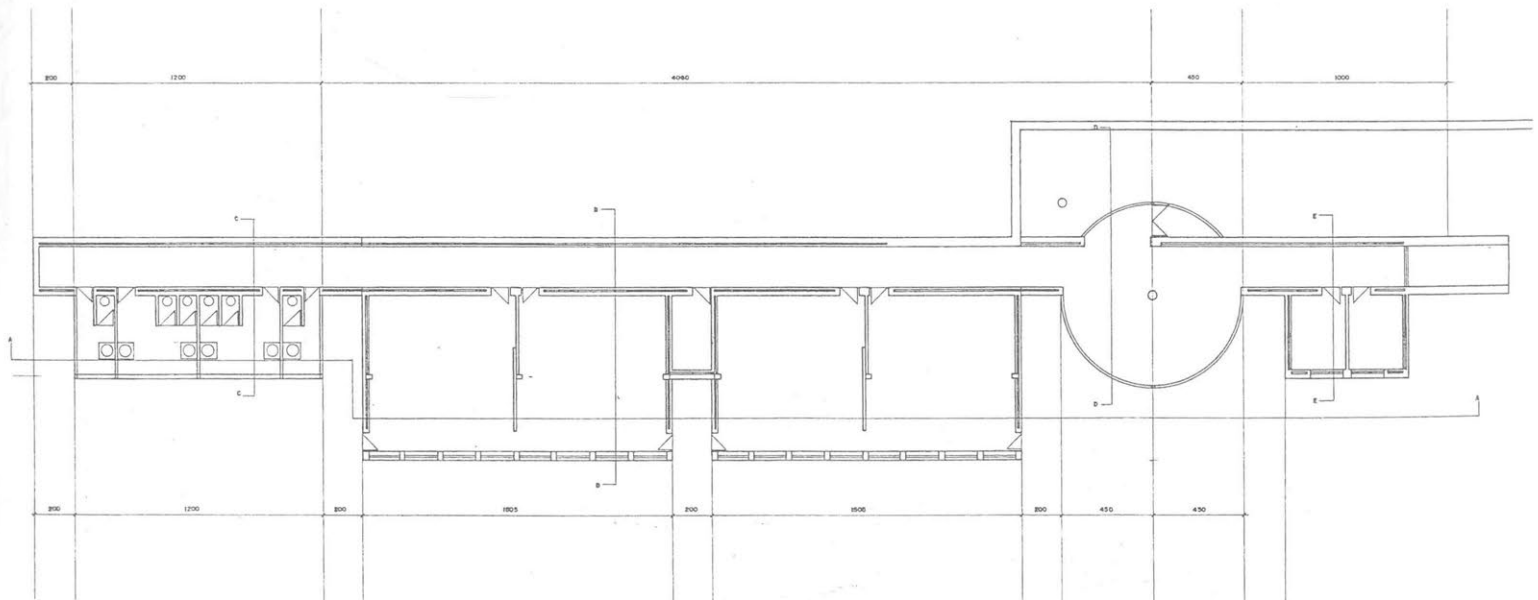


This small four-classroomed nursery school forms an annexe to the 1983 public school. A linear layout backing onto the lateral load-bearing wall was decided on, with the classrooms facing south towards the sun. Set out along a connecting corridor, the different elements are nevertheless volumetrically independent; each function has its own form. The rectangular service cores and the cylindrical entrance hall are walled with glass block.

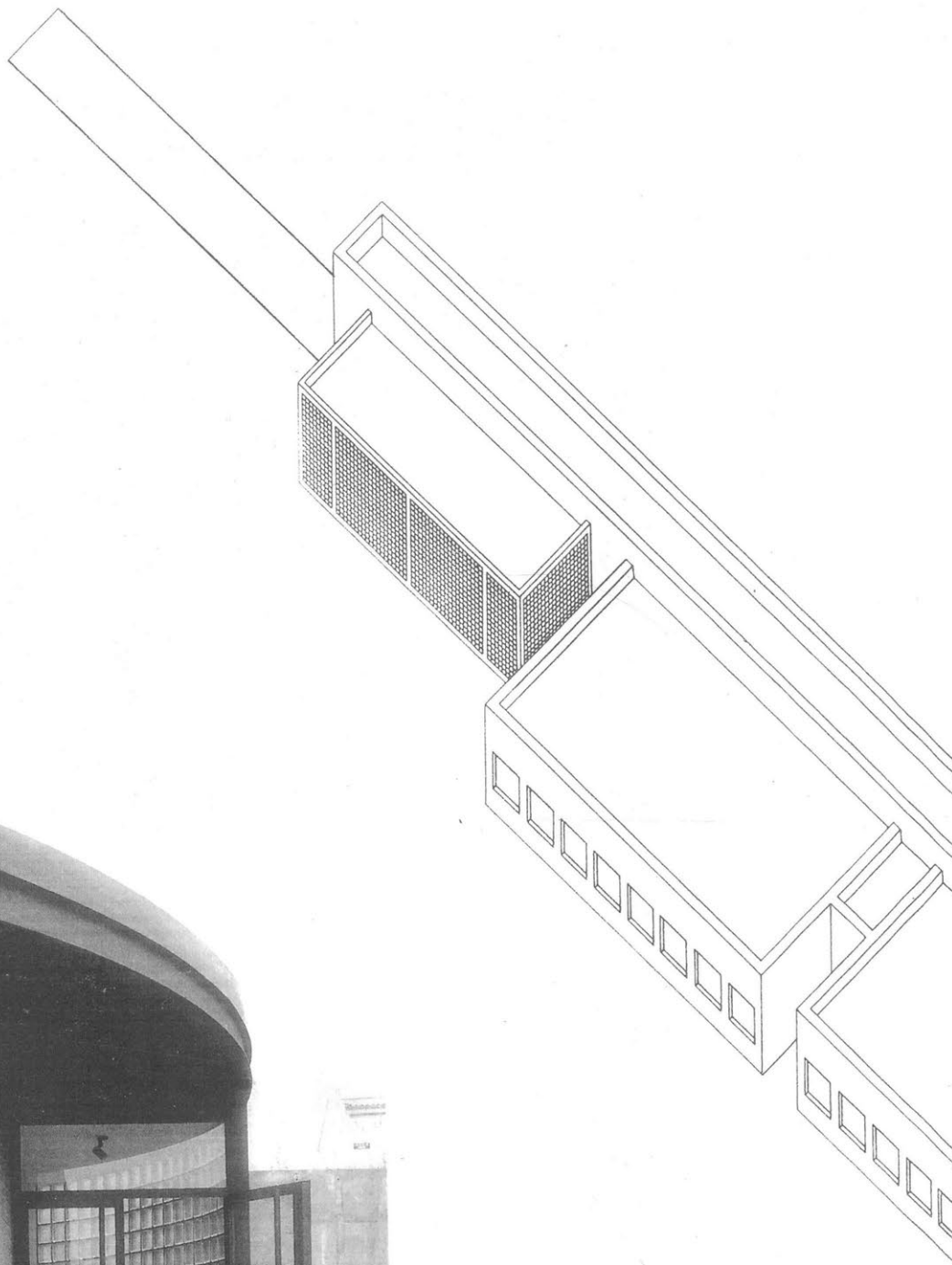
While using the same constructional elements and materials, the building strives to have a neutral aspect vis-à-vis the main school, which dominates the overall composition.

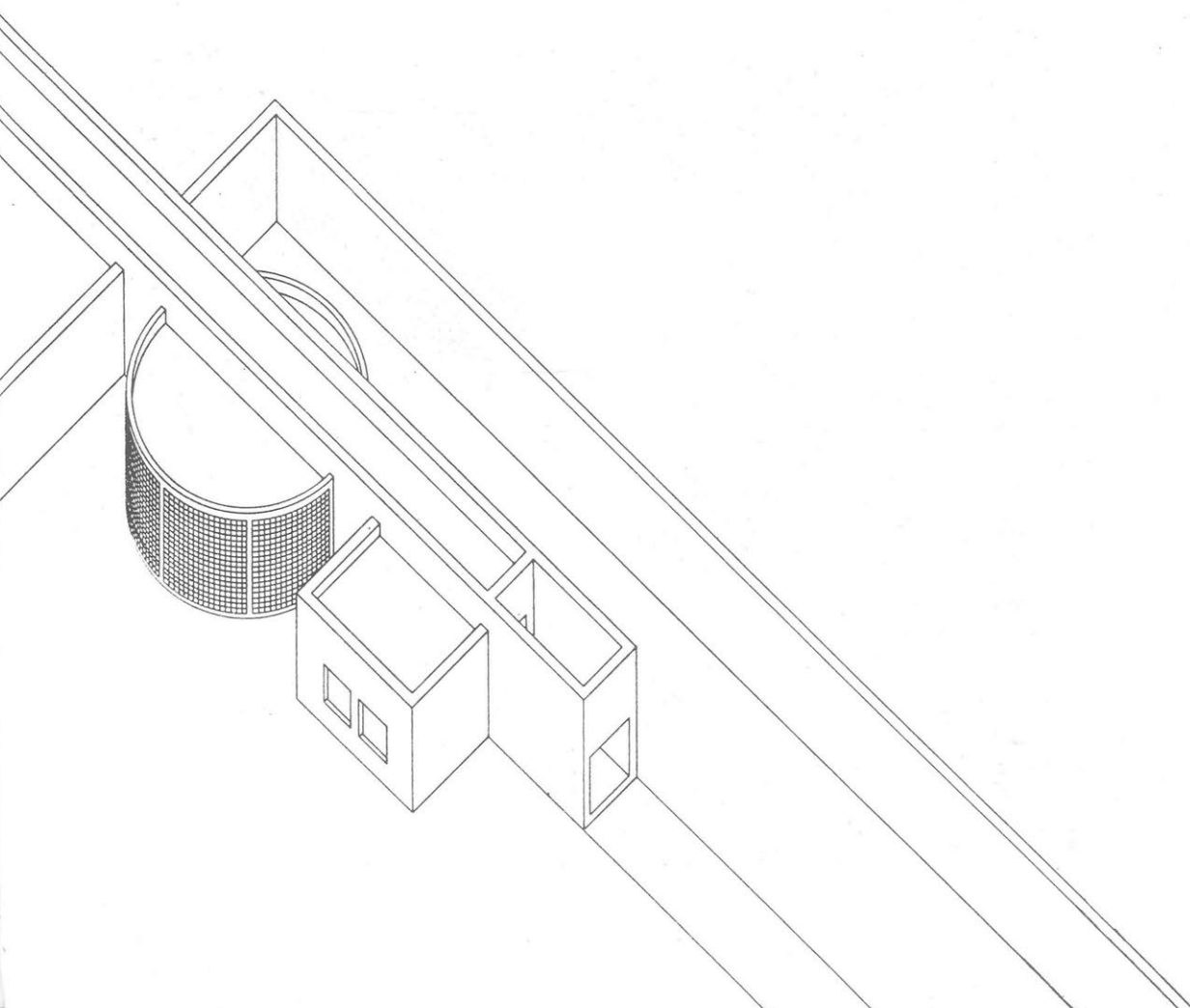
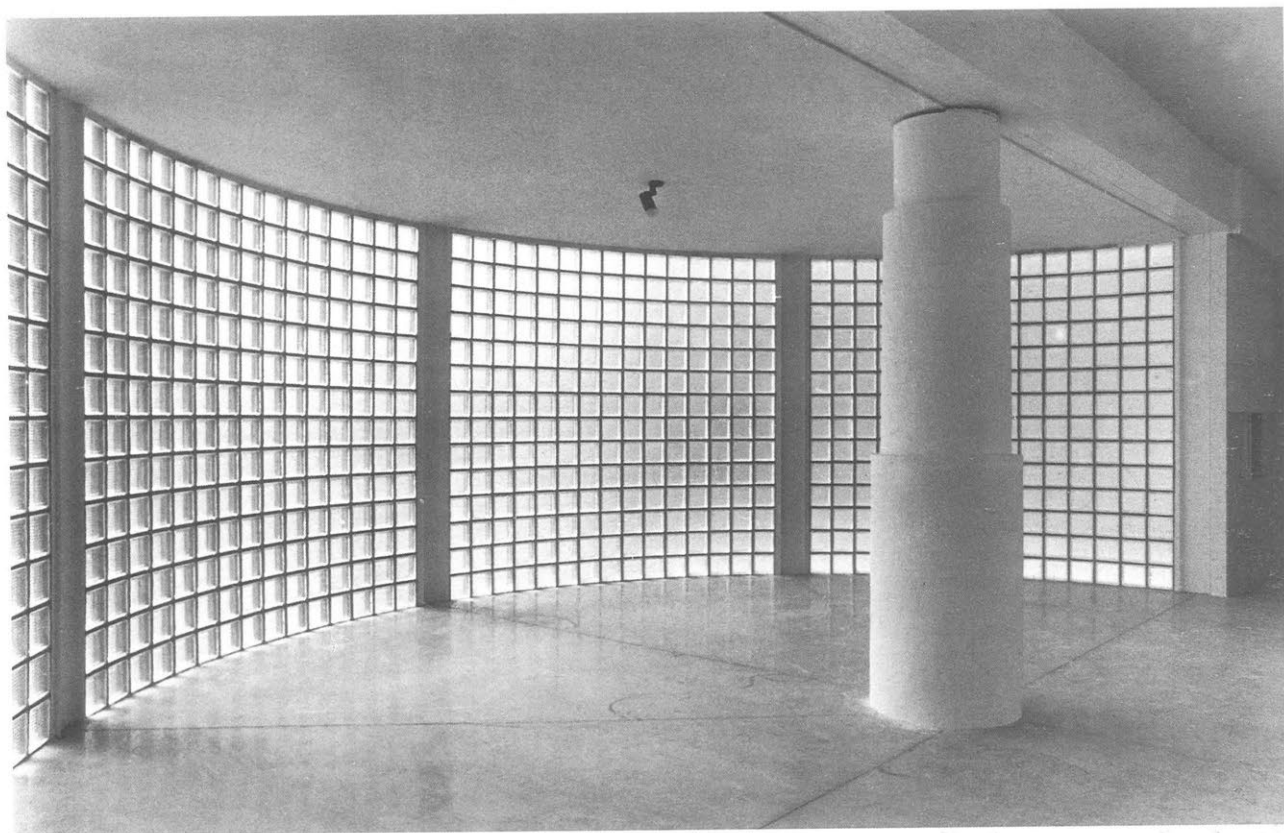


*Architect's sketch
of cylindrical
entrance hall,
the entrance block,
and ground-floor
plan.*



*Axonometric,
the entrance, and
the interior of the
cylindrical
entrance hall.*



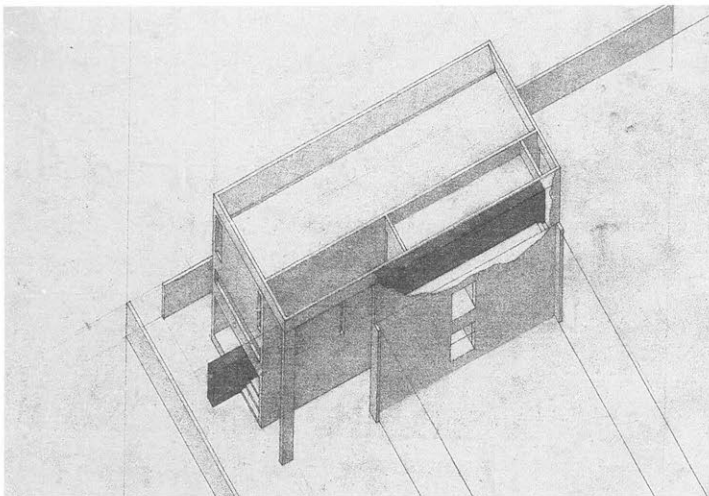
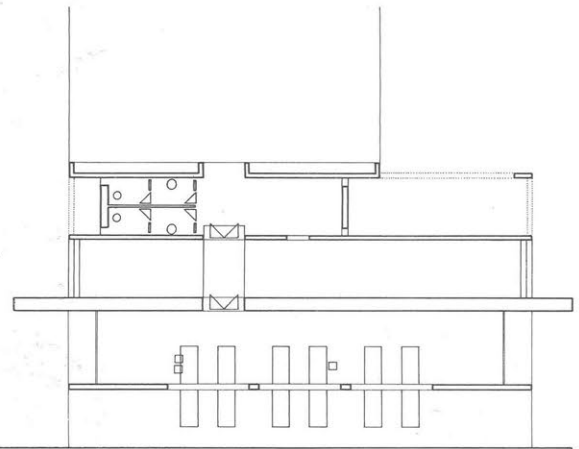
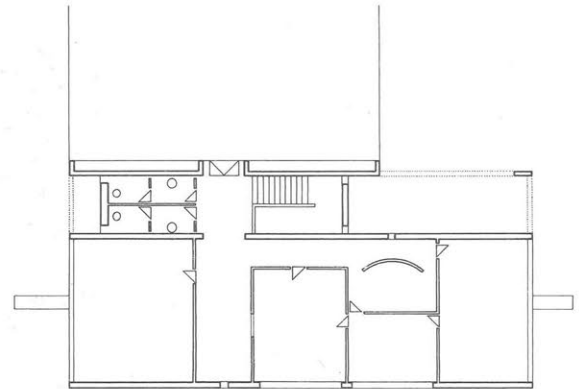
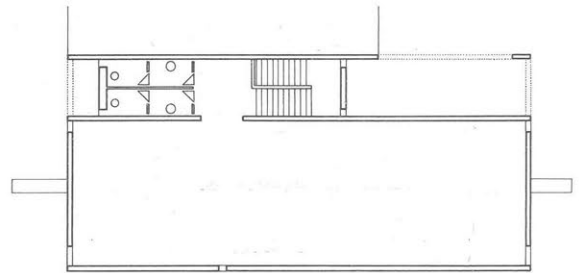
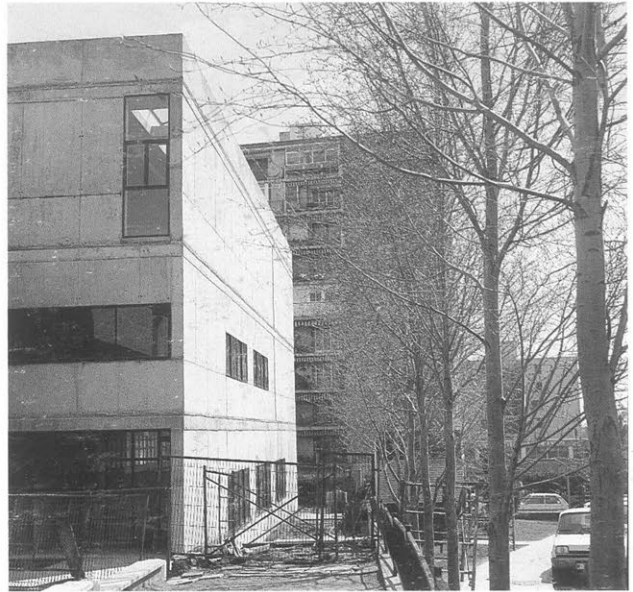


Extension to a school, Aluche Madrid, 1984

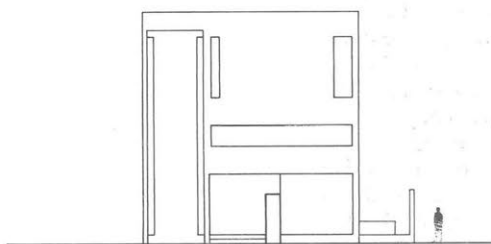
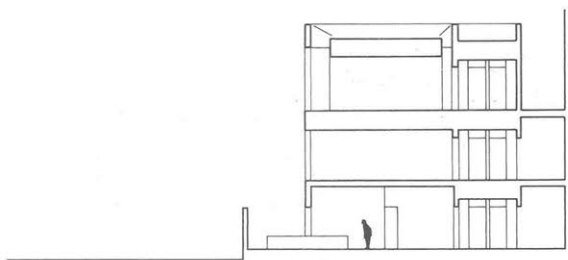
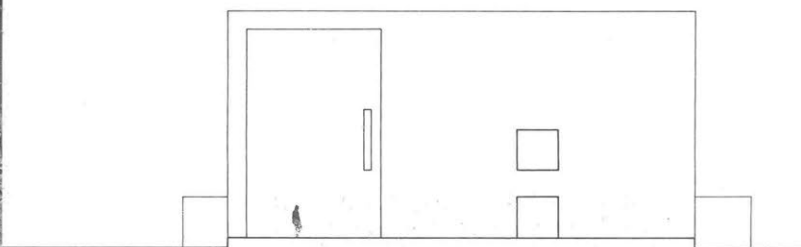
This compact three-story building on a 16 x 12 m rectangle functions as the ancillary services annex of an existing school.

It is resolved with enormous sobriety in a suitably hollowed-out box of reinforced concrete. The library is located on the ground floor, and the offices on the first. On the top floor is the well-lit, multi-purpose hall, with a continuous strip of skylights which illuminate the ceiling along its two inside edges.

The different floors were intended to be connected to those of the earlier building, using the new staircase as an entrance to the whole complex. All this has been realized with a tremendous economy of means.



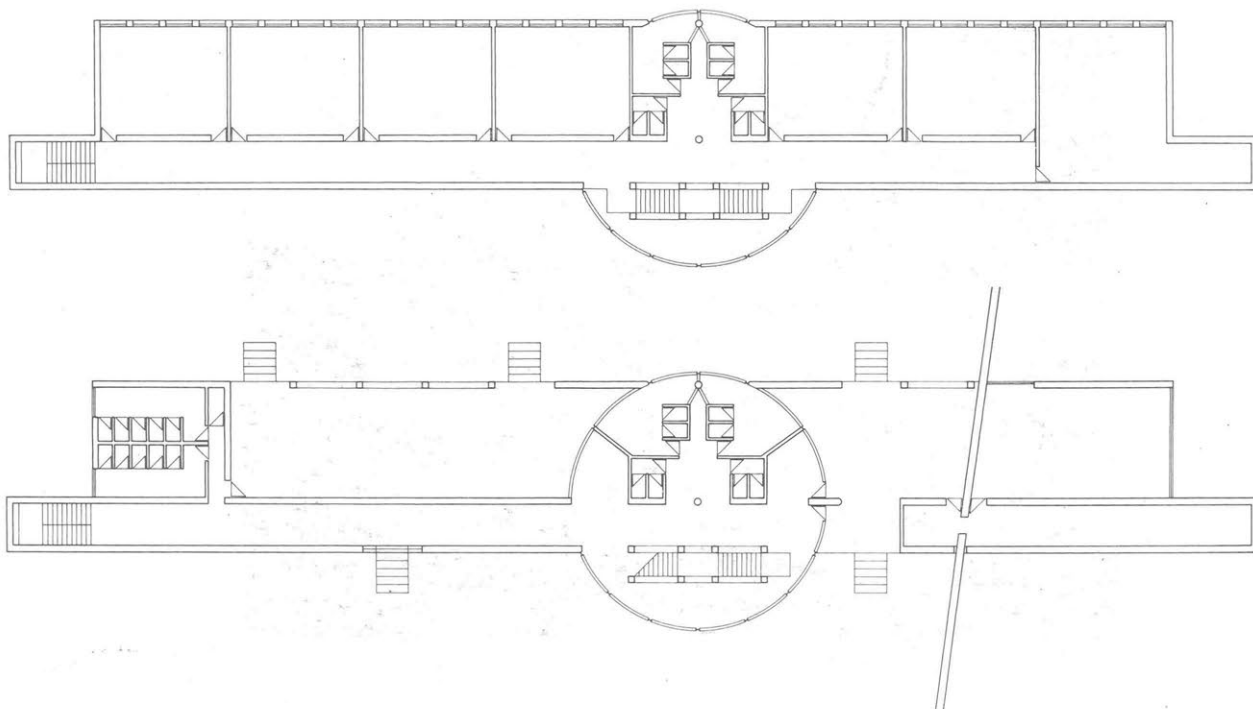
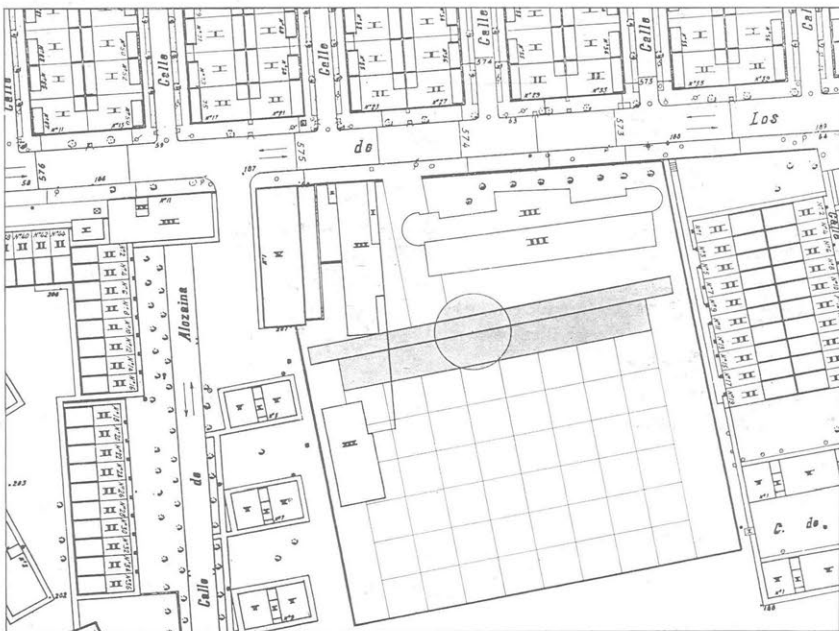
The street elevation, axonometric, and plans of second, first and ground floors.



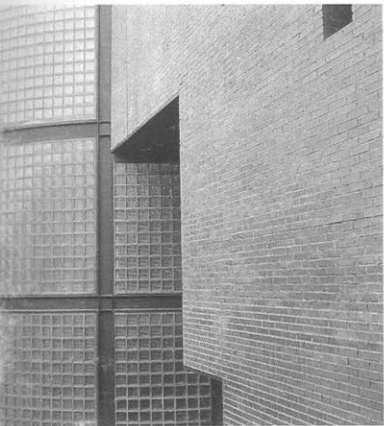
General view, side elevations, cross section, and detail of reinforced concrete surfaces.

A precise institutional program and a set of strict planning regulations gave rise to an emphatically linear building: a thick wall closed to the north, in which the main corridor is located, and open towards the south and the sun, where the classrooms are.

Needing extra space, the entrance hall, the point where all the horizontal and vertical corridors meet, breaches the wall and is revolved as a cylindrical mass. Inside, there is the triple-height space the different levels give onto, which is dominated by an open set of stairs providing ready access to all parts of the building. Glass-block walls convert this into a space replete with a diffuse north light, yet tautened by the strong south light which penetrates the transparent skylights in the roof.

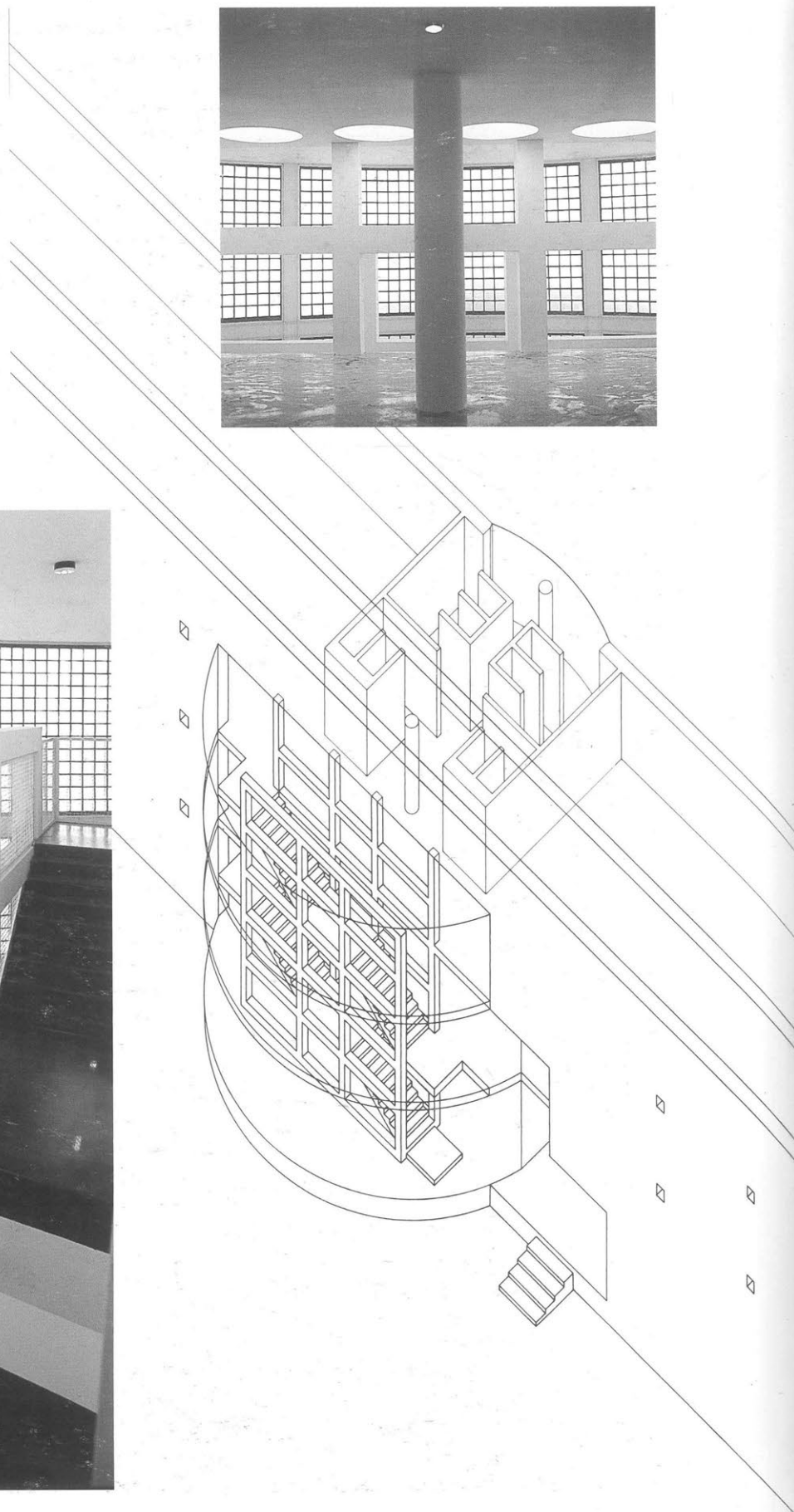
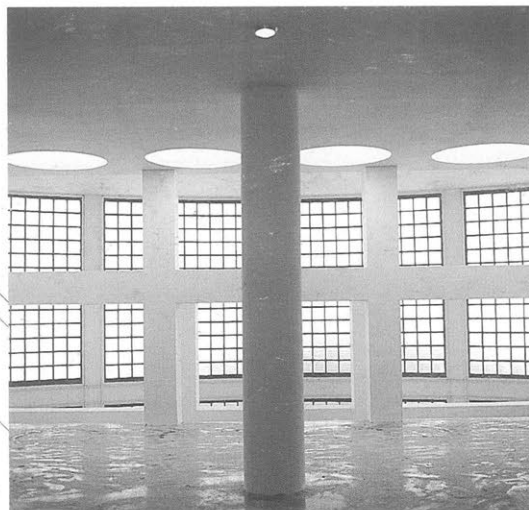


The south elevation, and axonometric showing the brick wall and the steel and glass cylinder.



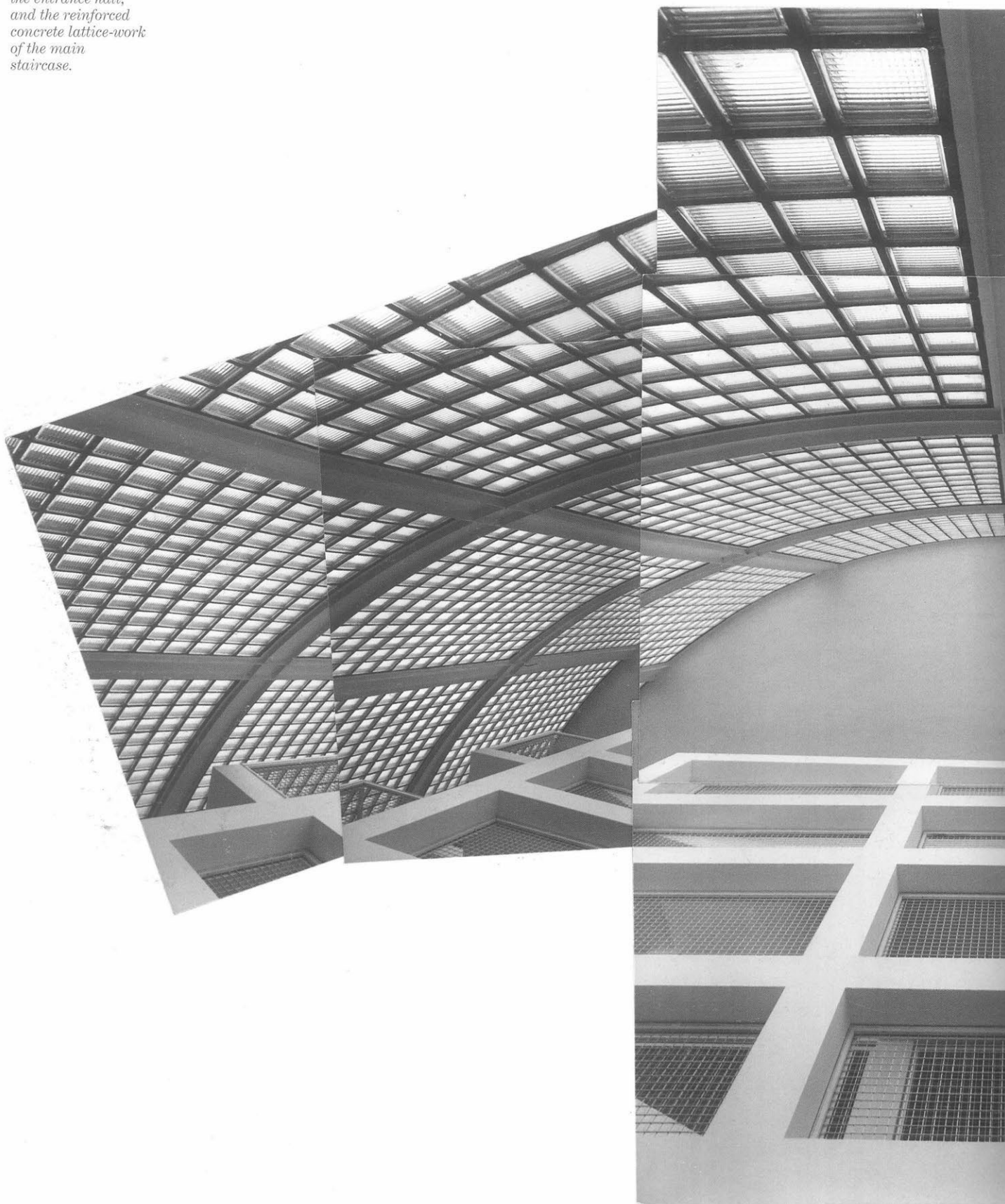
Detail and general view of south elevation with the entrance hall cylinder and the cantilever roof linked to the existing school on the right.

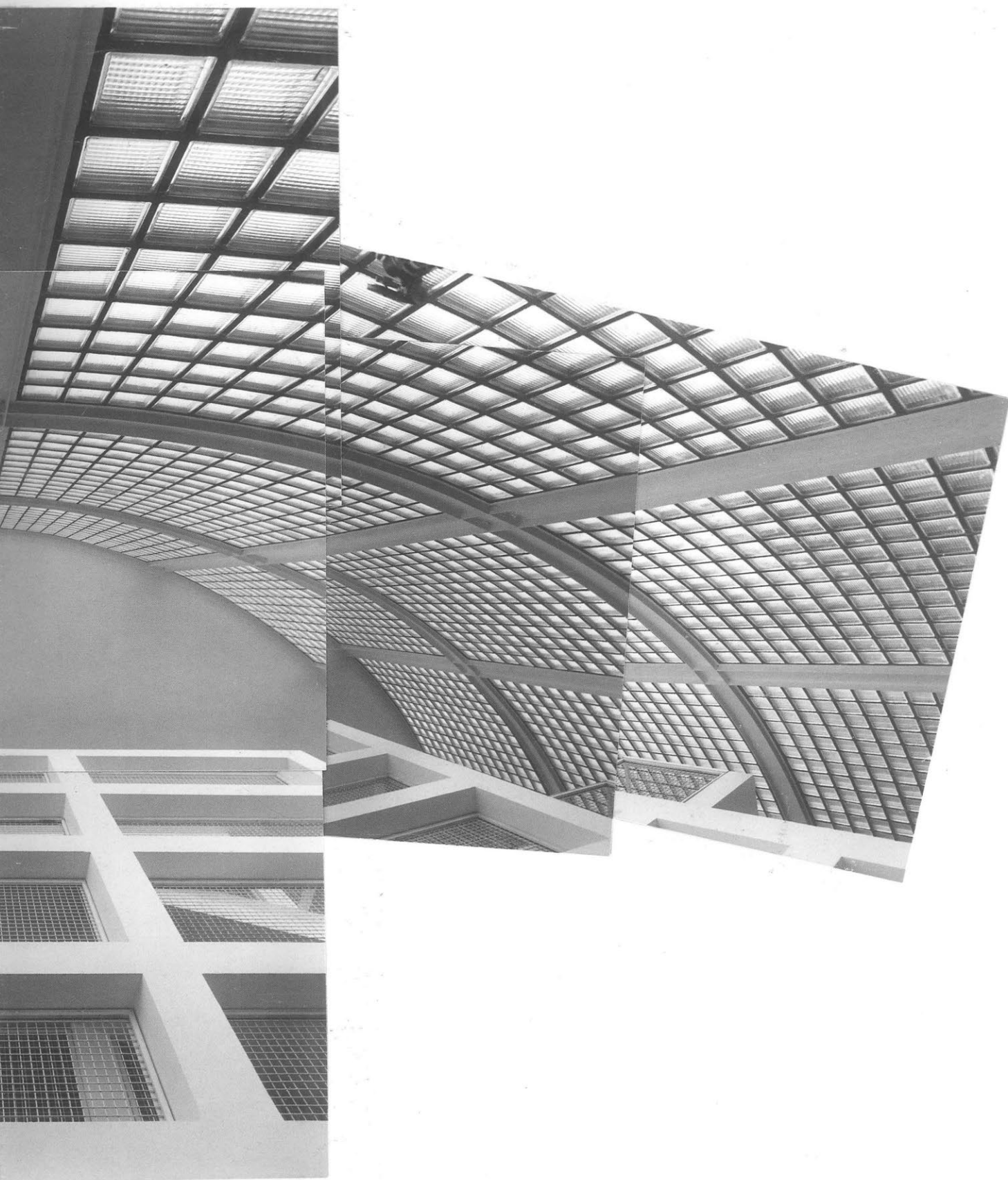
*Axometric,
and views of
cylindrical
entrance hall
showing the double
reinforced concrete
lattice-work of the
main staircase.*





*The curved steel and
glass brick wall of
the entrance hall,
and the reinforced
concrete lattice-work
of the main
staircase.*

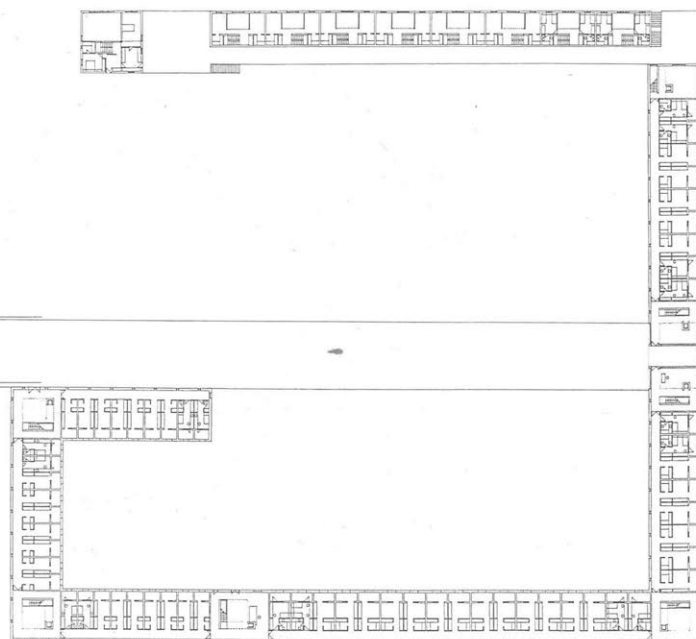
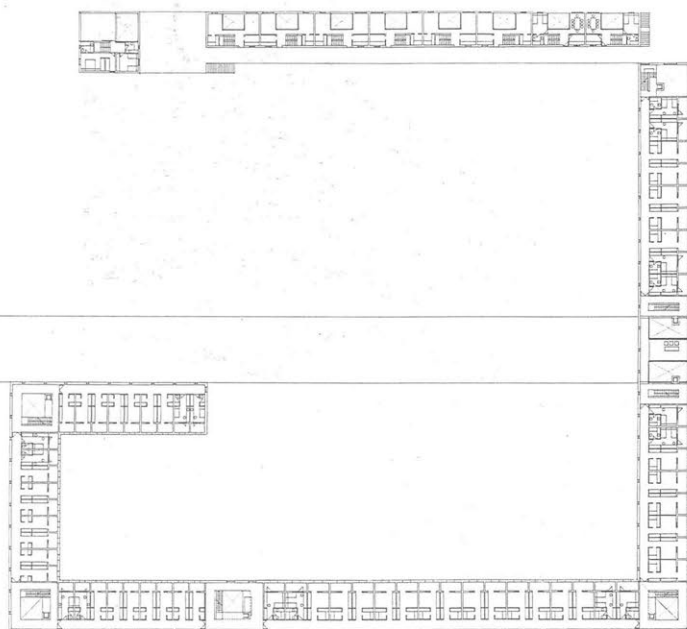
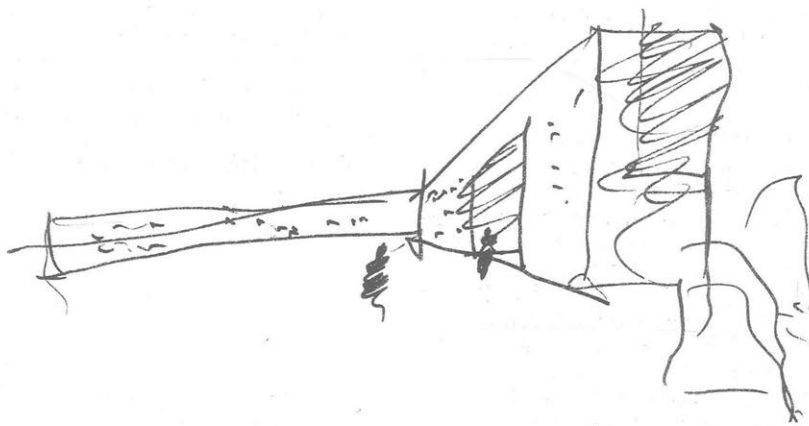




High Performance Sports Center, Las Rozas, Madrid, 1987

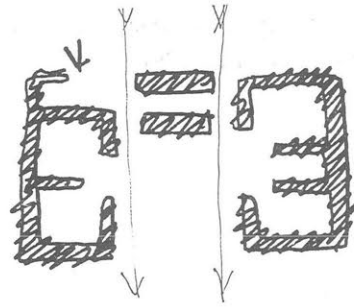
*Architect's sketch,
and plans of
ground and typical
floors.*

The idea, put to five teams of recognized architects, was to create a series of buildings for the training of 'élite' sportsmen and women. In this instance a residential complex for more than 300 sports people was to be resolved. A rampart-like building around a square is proposed, with sufficient presence to be read from the nearby highway as an enormous, tensile box of grey granite with the verandah openings hollowed out of it. Generally speaking the edifice has two floors but, by maintaining the consistency of the line of the cornice and in order to adapt itself to the topography of the terrain, it rises to three on the south facade and four on the east.



Public housing, La Viña,
Vallecas, Madrid, 1988

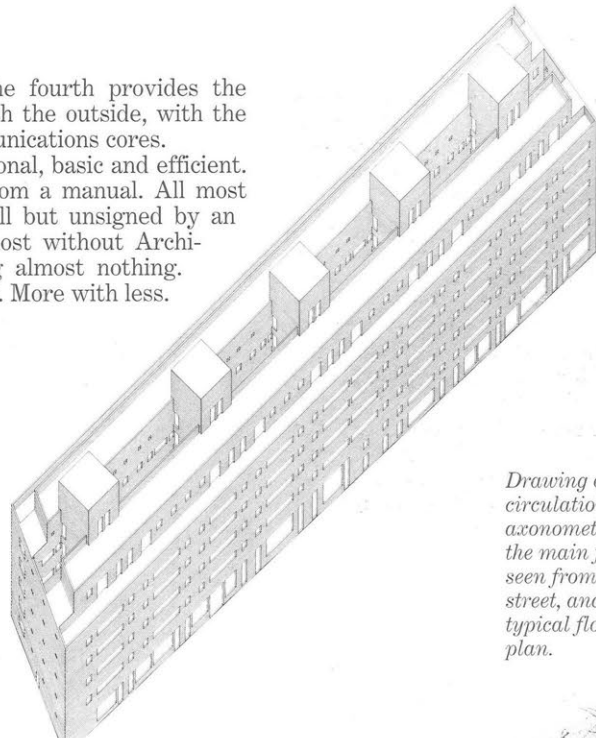
collaborators: Antonio Domínguez Iglesias and Angel Ximénez de Embún



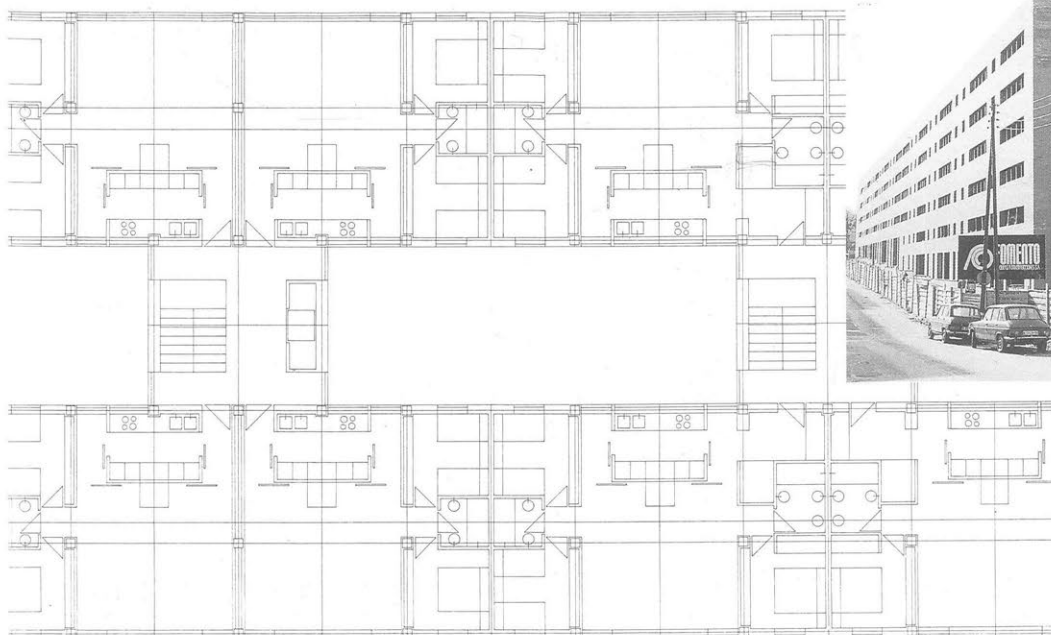
In compliance with current building regulations, this reduced-scale apartment block, six stories high and with extensive views of Madrid to the west, is set out in a line on the edge of a conurbation.

The dwellings are resolved as a single continuous space, a horizontal space with horizontal light, between two facades, one of which faces the landscape or the street, the other the courtyard. Entirely open from side to side and traversed by Light and Air. Ceiling and floor, upper and lower levels all of a piece. Horizontal Light tautening the horizontal Space. The kitchen, the Hearth, in the center, presiding over the space without interrupting it. On both sides, four rooms, set out two by two and with main services, marking the transverse axis. The geometrical contrivance of double axiality underscores the clarity of the controlled space. Three of the rooms are bed-

rooms, and the fourth provides the connection with the outside, with the vertical communications cores. Essential, rational, basic and efficient. As if taken from a manual. All most anonymous. All but unsigned by an architect. Almost without Architecture. Using almost nothing. Of the essence. More with less.

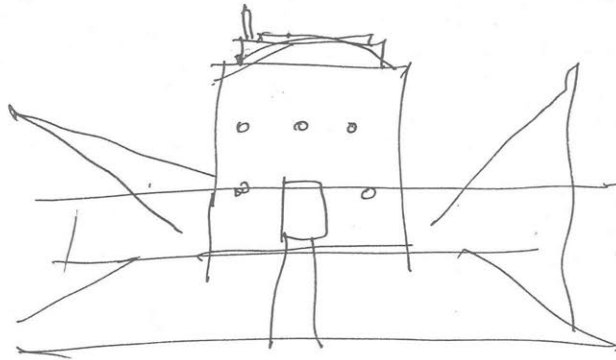


Drawing of circulation, axonometric, the main front seen from the street, and typical floor plan.



Turégano House, Pozuelo,
Madrid, 1988

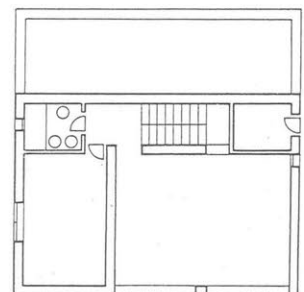
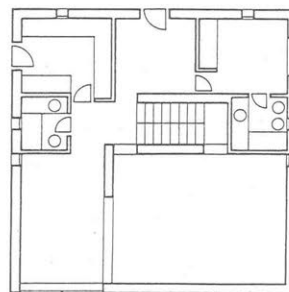
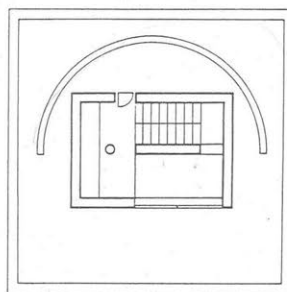
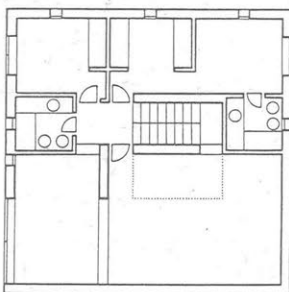
*Architect's sketch
of entrance
elevation, views
from the street and
garden, and plans
of various levels.*



This house resulted from a competition organized by the owners among their architect friends.

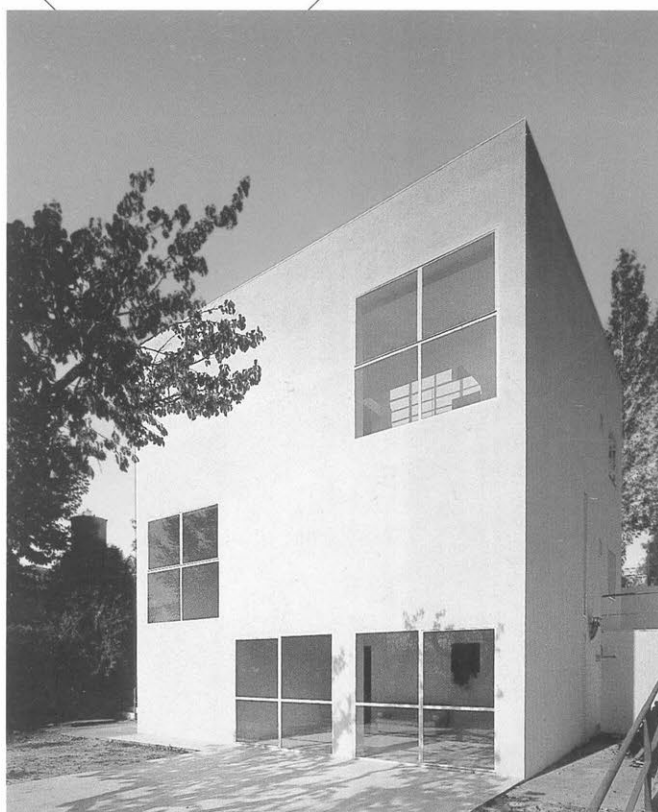
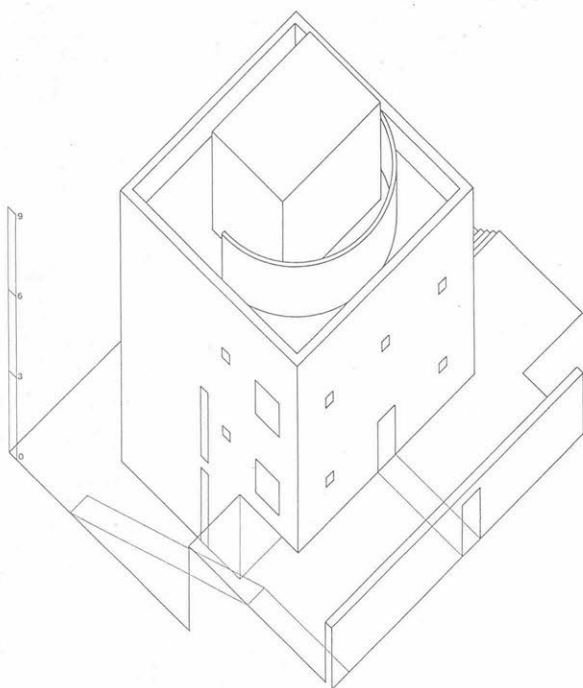
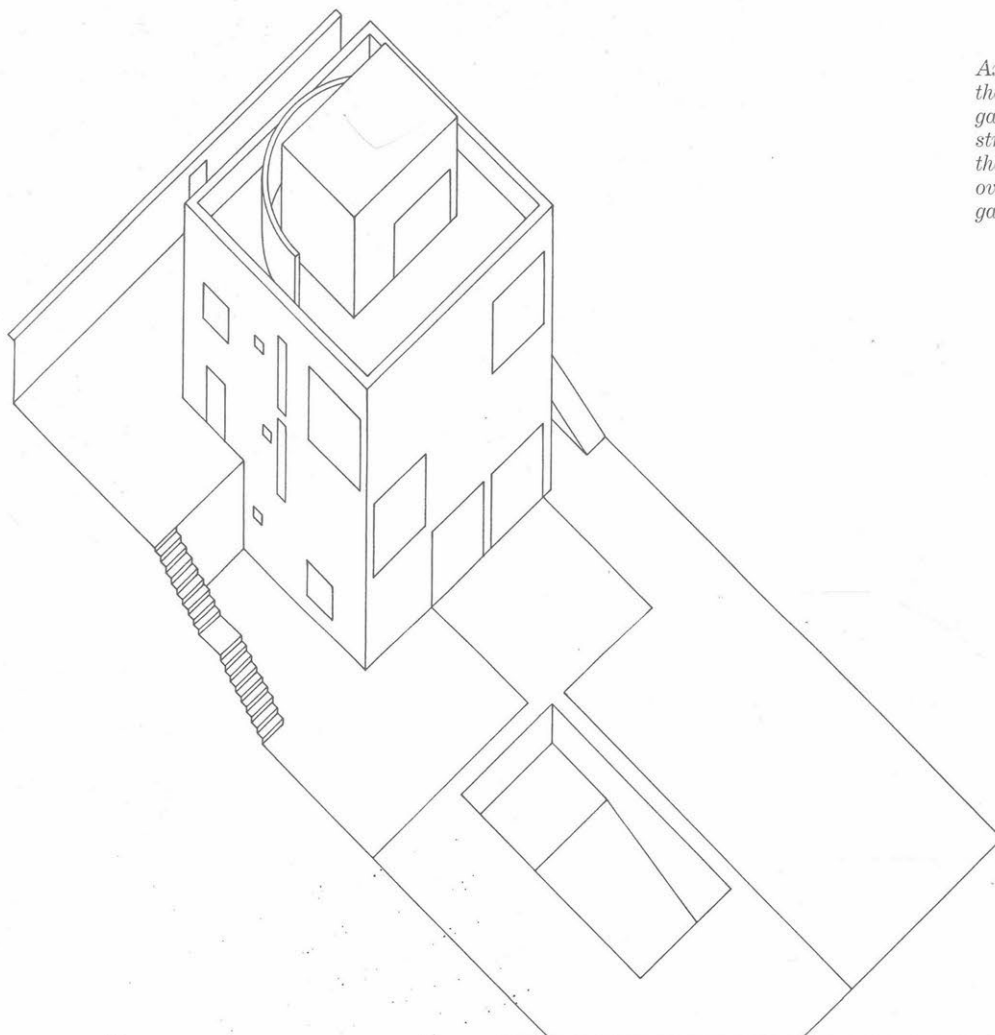
The topographical site, halfway up a hillside, rigorous compliance with the planning regulations, and the need for maximum economy were all resolved compositionally by means of a white, cubic 'cabin' 10 x 10 x 10 meters in size. The white cube is divided in two: a northern half, with the service zone; and a southern half, with the served spaces. The first contains a central strip with bathrooms, toilets and stairs. The bedrooms and kitchen face due north. The twin-level living and dining areas are situated in the served half, and the studio in the uppermost part. The studio looks over the dining area and the latter looks over the living area, thus producing a triple-height diagonal space. The cubic nature of this white cabin is accentuated by the tension of the windows flush with the facade, and by the white finish given to everything.

In moving east-southwest, the Light, a major feature in this house, is gradually picked up, trapped, by different windows and openings, and so becomes the spatial protagonist of the design. This, then, is a diagonal space traversed by diagonal light.





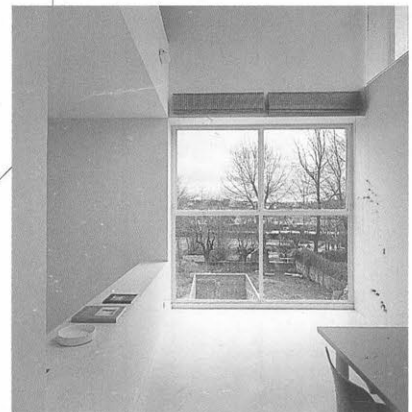
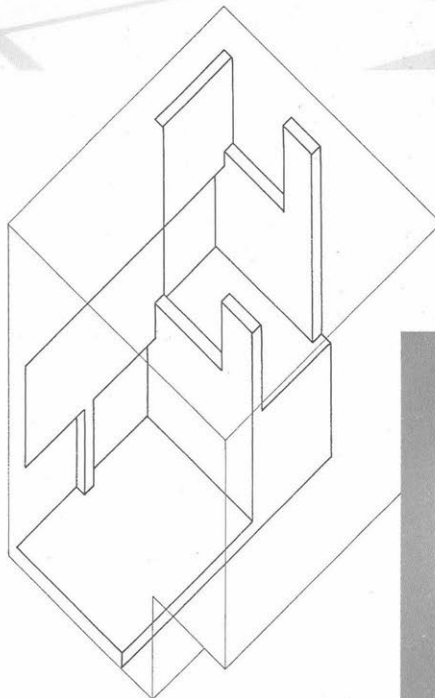
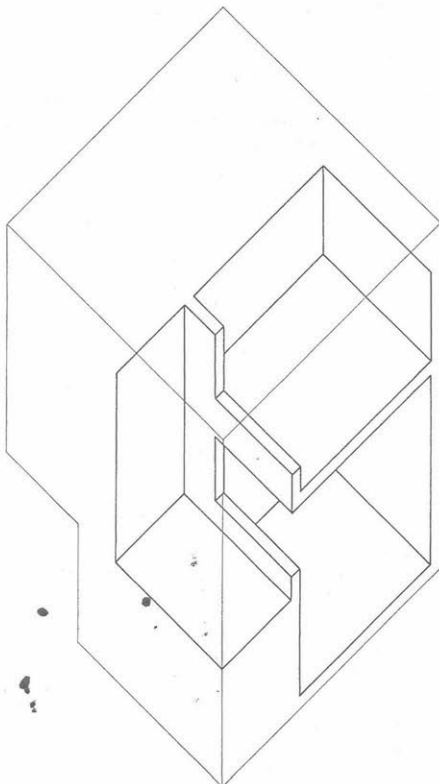
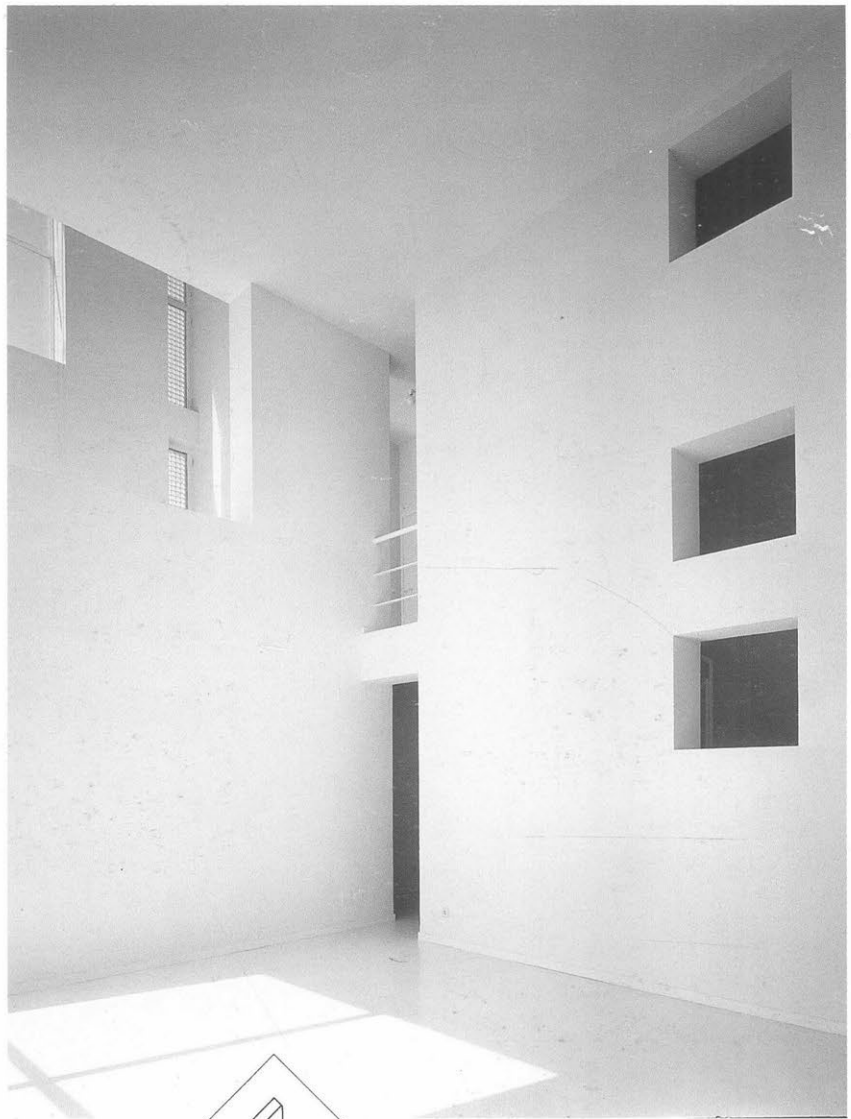
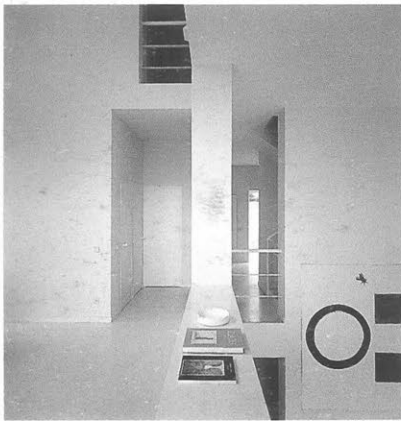
*Axonometrics of
the house from the
garden and the
street, and view of
the south elevation
overlooking the
garden.*



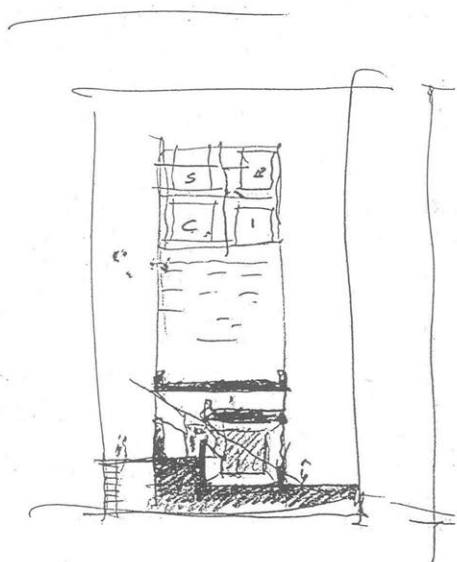


The full-height living space overlooked by upper-level areas, and details of the dining-room.

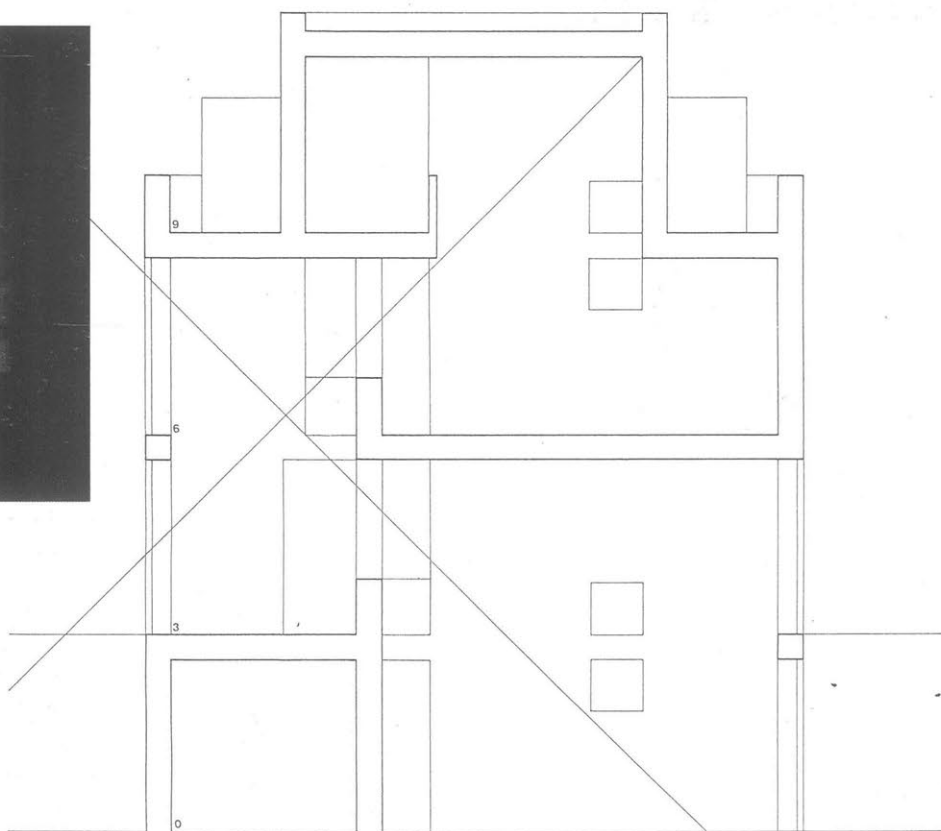
Axonometrics showing the linkage between the lower-level living space, the middle-level dining-room and the upper-level study.



Architect's sketch,
cross section, and
view over the living
space with
sunshine on the
opposite wall.



*Follower of
Rembrandt, Man
Seated Reading at a
Table in a Lofty
Room, 1631-1650,
55.1 x 46.5 cm, The
National Gallery,
London.*



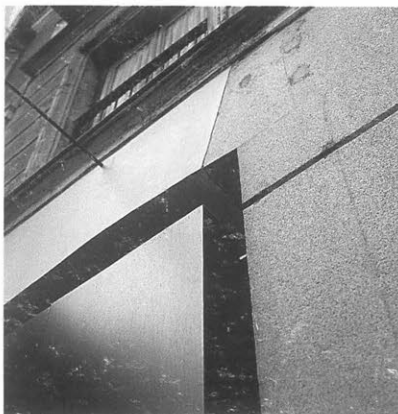
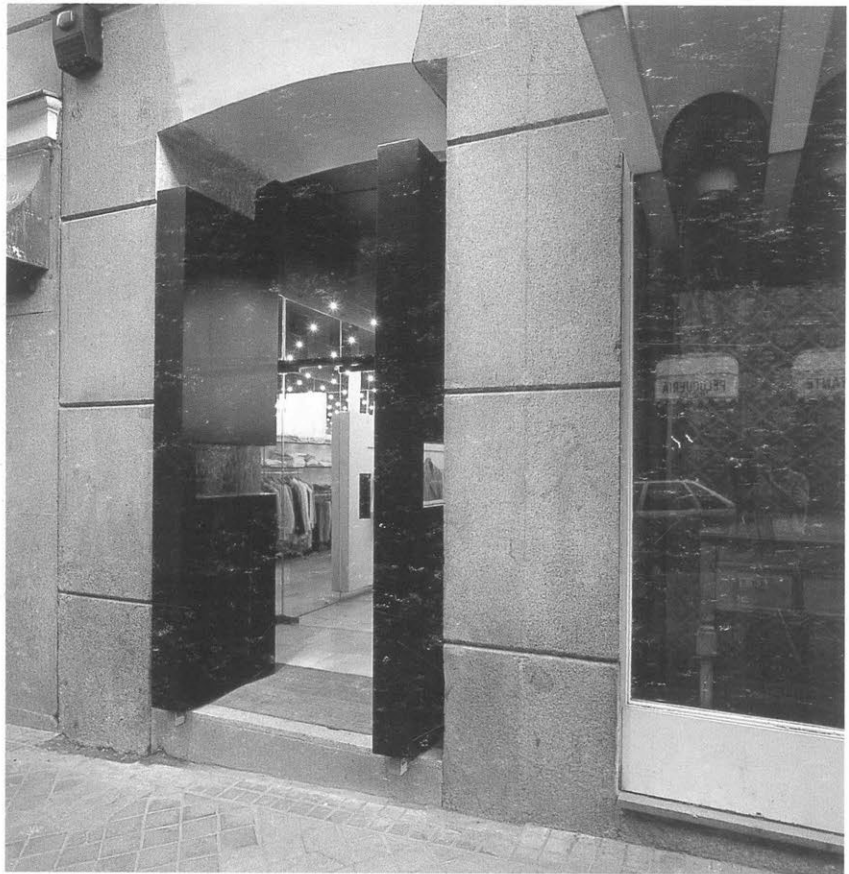
'Jesús del Pozo' Store,
Madrid, 1988

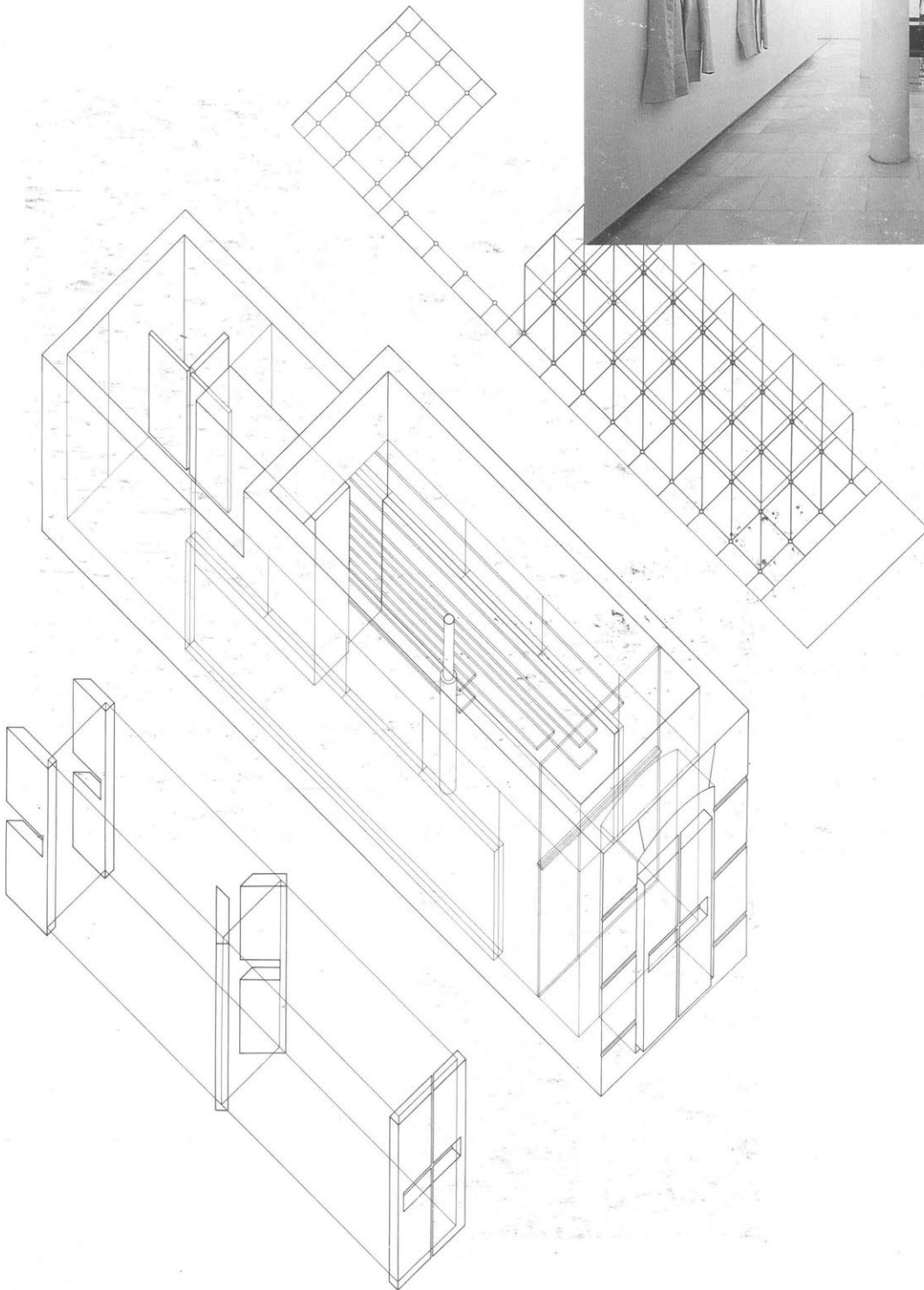
collaborator: Antonio Romero Fernández

*View and detail
of the entrance,
axonometrics
of the structural
components
of the shop,
and interior view.*

We wished to reaffirm the value of the original stone facade and to elaborate a space which, being extremely small and dark, would have a lot of light and give a feeling of room: to propose a solution that would, furthermore, guarantee the security of the store during closing hours.

To do this the original facade is left clear, thus highlighting the well-conceived composition of the lower part of the original building, with its four stone arches. An extremely diaphanous interior is created by glazing the narrow street front and strategically positioning mirrors opposite the longitudinal walls. Entirely black above a certain height, the ceiling is set with spotlights which, reflected in the paired mirrors, are repeated ad infinitum like some star-studded sky. To end with, the space giving onto the street is closed off with a number of strong and thick doors of black-lacquered panel which, apart from being secure, look as if they must be. A horizontal incision is made in these at the passer-by's eye-level, which provides a tantalizing view of the shop interior when closed. The subtle separation of this door from the edges of the stone doorway enhances both the image of the door's strength and the clean lines of the facade aperture in an adroit play of contrasts. As if these were the gates of that starry sky.





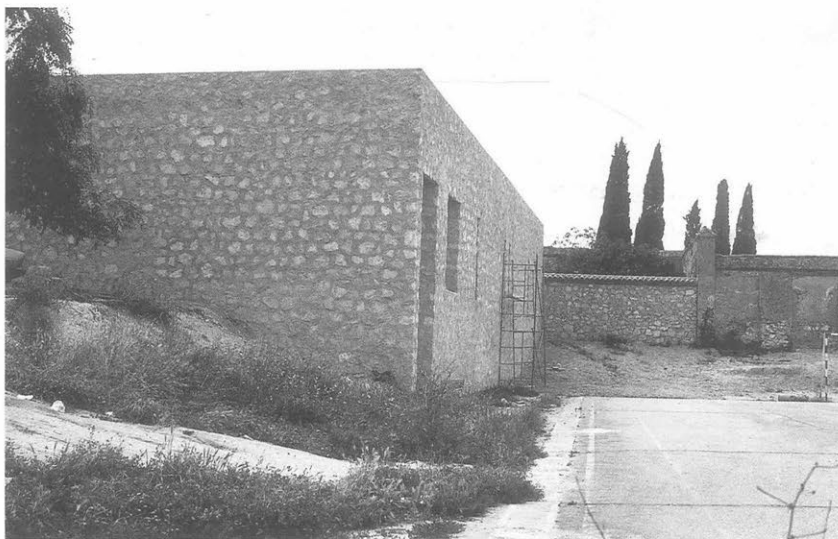
Public school, Loeches,
Madrid, 1989

*North and
south elevations.*

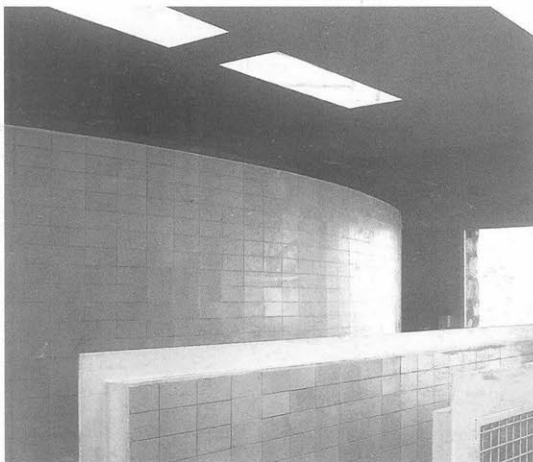
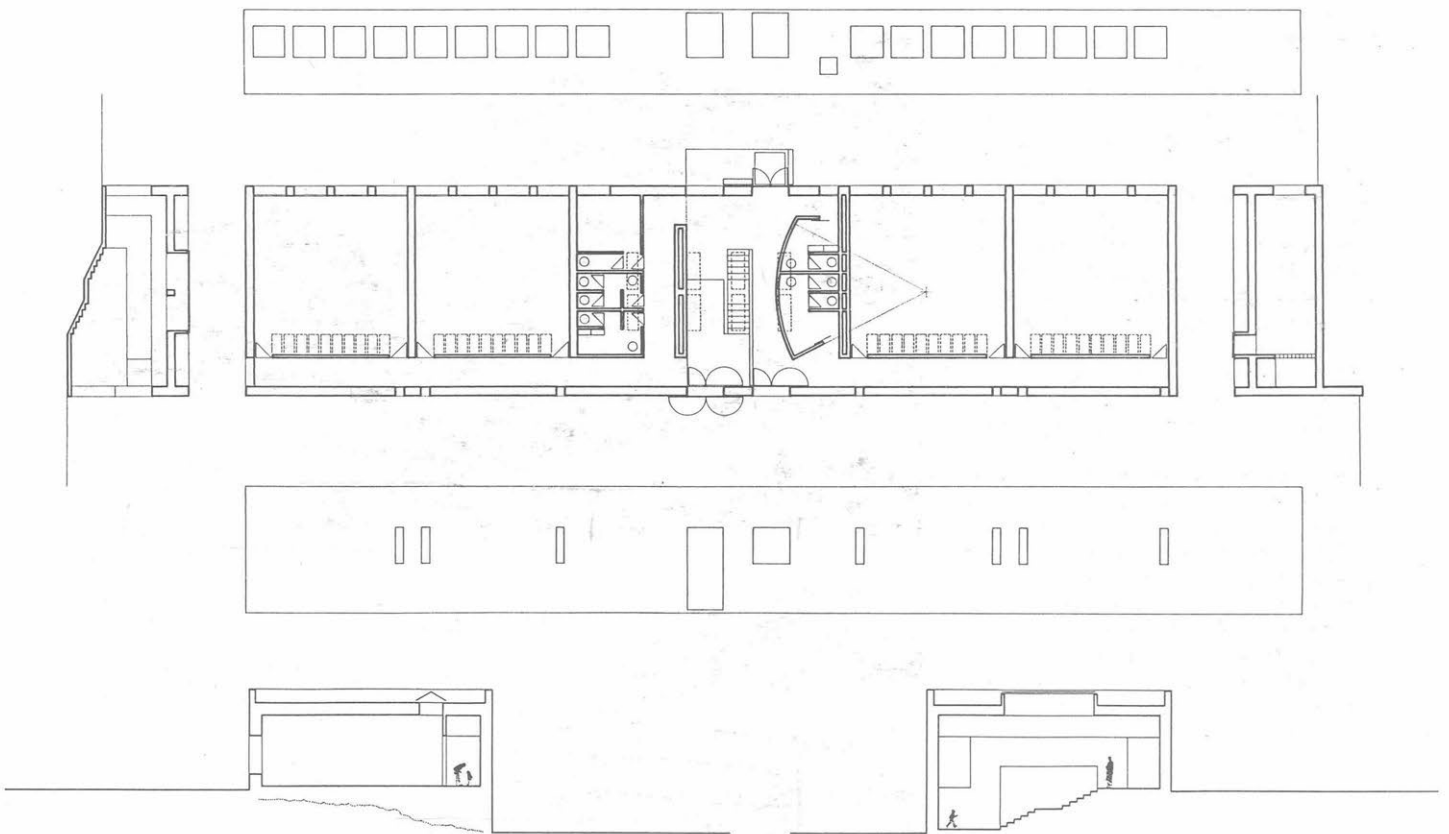
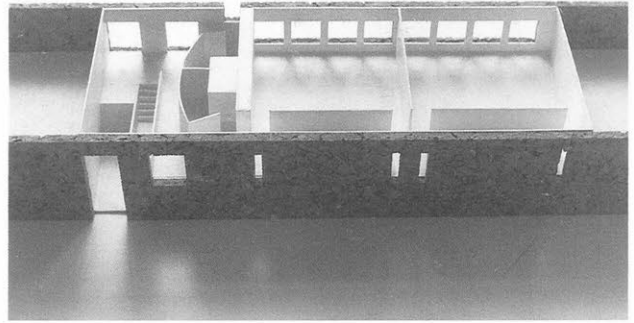
The village of Loeches is set on a hill overlooking the wide expanse of flat countryside surrounding it. It was there, between two massive 17th-century church and convent buildings, that a number of ill-starred schools had been constructed, totally at odds with their surroundings. The problem was resolved by fusing the same stone as in the convents to create a rampart wall. This structure was intended to partition off the former and yet affirm a sense of continuity with the history of the place.

The program unfolds intramurally. The self-effacing north facade appears as one more wall, while the classrooms face south towards the sunshine. In the entrance hall, which has two different levels to compensate for the sloping terrain, two large openings frame the landscape. The passageway is illuminated by light from the classroom skylights which shines through the partition walls made of glass block.

The main objective has been achieved through a profound understanding of the site and a recouping of the previously lost order.



Top view of open
model, ground-
floor plan,
elevations, cross
sections, and detail
of curved services
block.

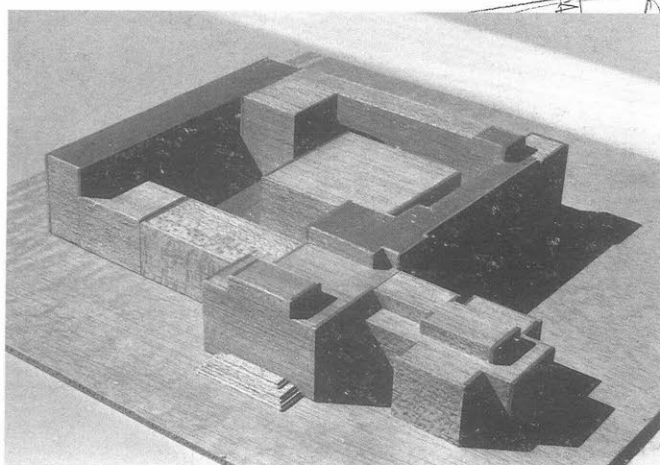
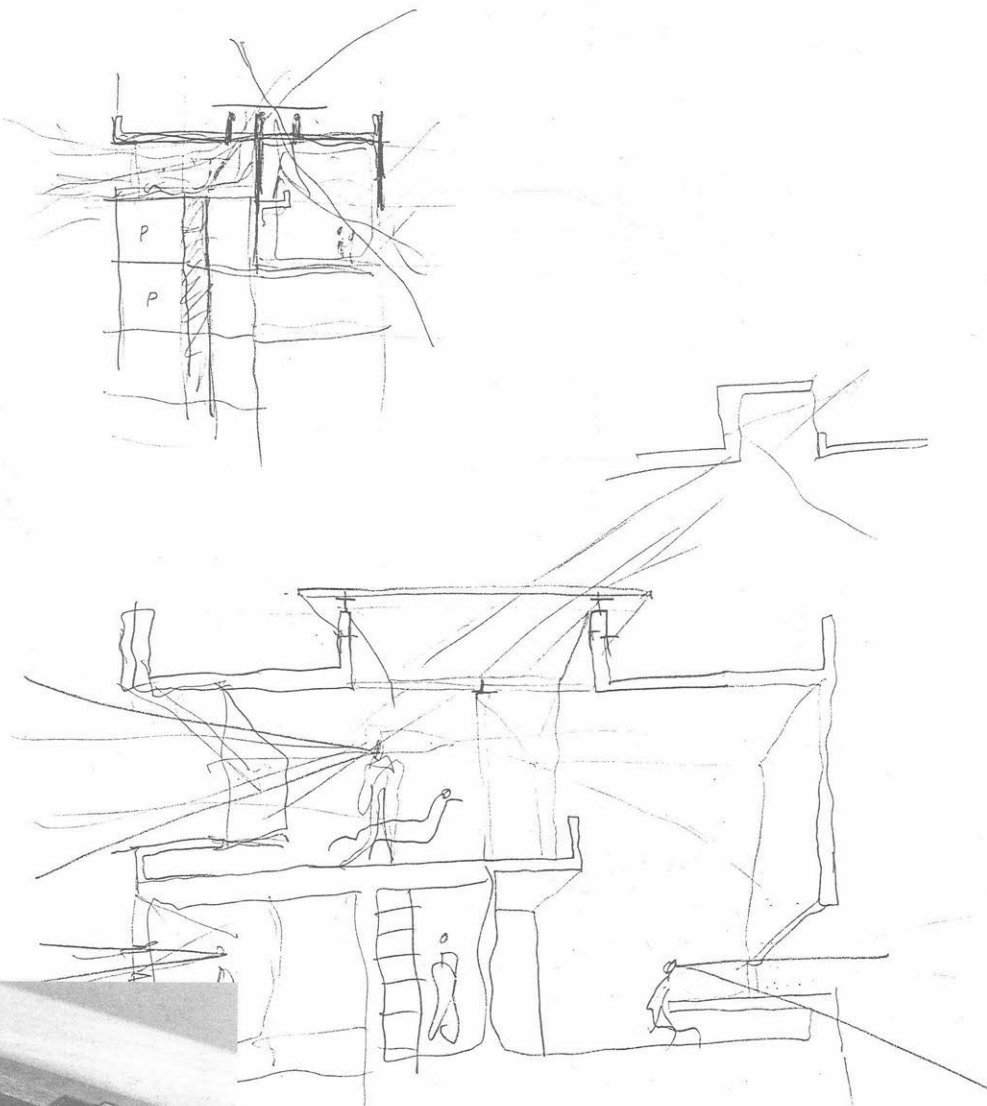


Extension to the Escuela de Arquitectura de Madrid,
Madrid, 1989

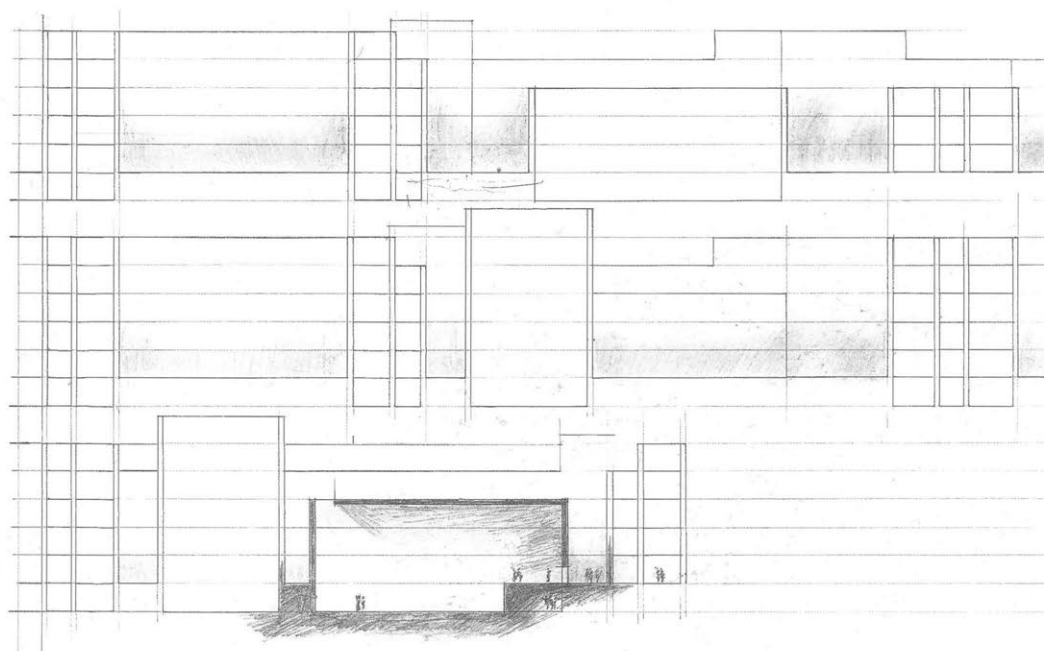
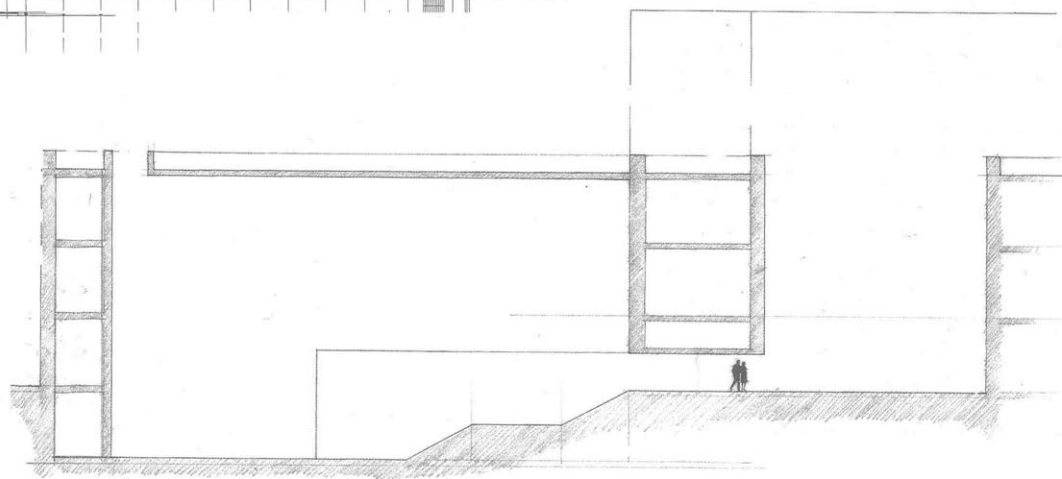
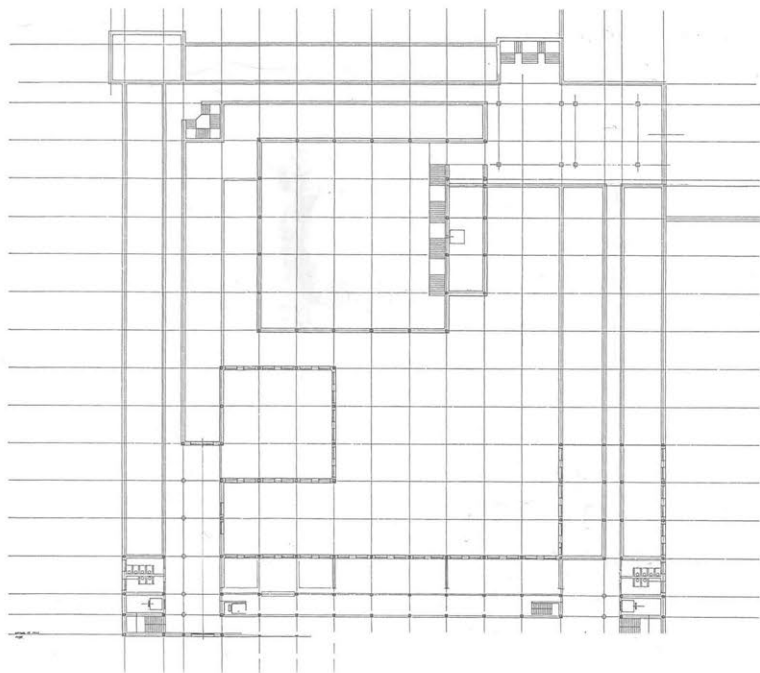
*Architect's sketches
and model.*

The main virtues of the Escuela de Arquitectura de Madrid building, designed by the architect Pascual Bravo, are the flexibility that comes from a well-organized sense of space and the simplicity of its circulatory system, with long corridors laid out side by side and at right angles to each other converging in a series of spacious hallways.

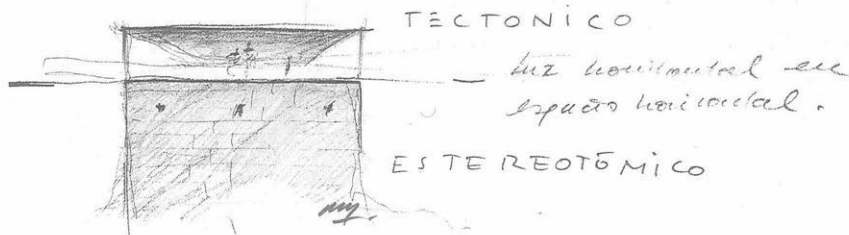
Careful analysis of the floorplan calls for prolonging the excessive length of the 'L' formed by the north and east wings by closing off the extant courtyard and adding the necessary vertical communications. Set within this now enclosed courtyard is a new and spacious assembly hall whose polyvalent and flexible single space is tautened by the light. The edifice is to be simple, following the structural rhythms of the existing building and employing more or less the same materials.



*First-floor plan,
and study sections
of great hall.*



Dalmau House,
Burgos, 1990



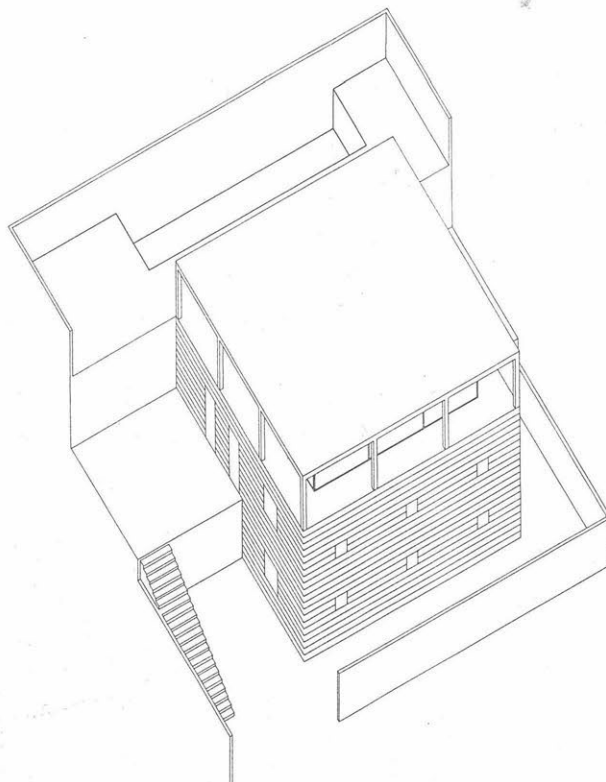
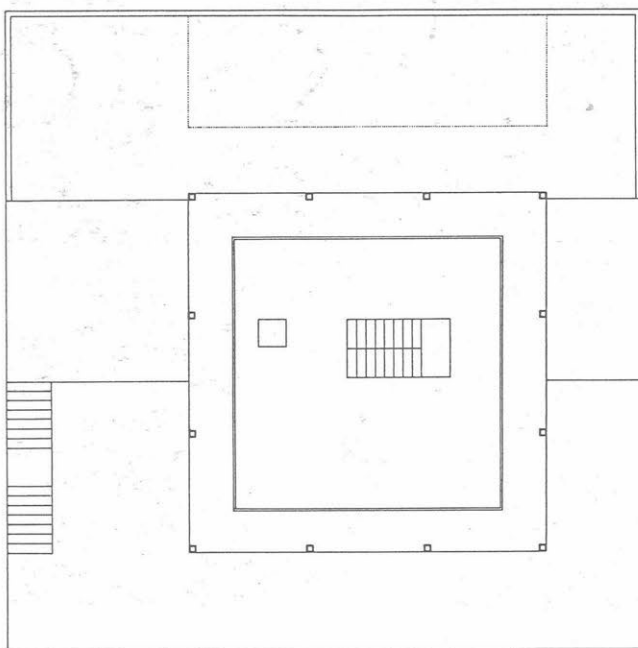
We are proposing in this house to conjoin, radically so, two parts of the architectonic system: a stereotomic base supporting a tectonic component. The site, in the highest reaches of an urban development and with splendid views of the distant horizon, would suggest locating the living area in the top part of the house and the sleeping area in the lower. The continental climate makes this the most appropriate solution.

A twin-level box of stone laid out on the square, the stereotomic base accommodates the bedrooms and garage on the lowest floor. At the mid-level, the kitchen and dining room.

The tectonic component above, made of steel and glass and flush with the stone prism supporting it, is converted into a transparent, continuous and unified space. In order to accentuate this, the stone used on the facades will also be used for its flooring. The four cor-

nerstones are meant to be 'all of a piece'. The stairs leading to the transparent top floor look as if they are carved out of this 'rock'. And the required lift will ascend unencumbered from below.

Above, in the cabin, a tectonic glass box, the house's intellectual, meditative, dream life. Below, in the cave, a stereotomic stone box, the 'animal' side of things: eating, sleeping.



Architect's sketch,
second-floor plan,
longitudinal
section, and
axonometric.

Arco, Madrid, 1990

collaborator: Alejandro Gómez García

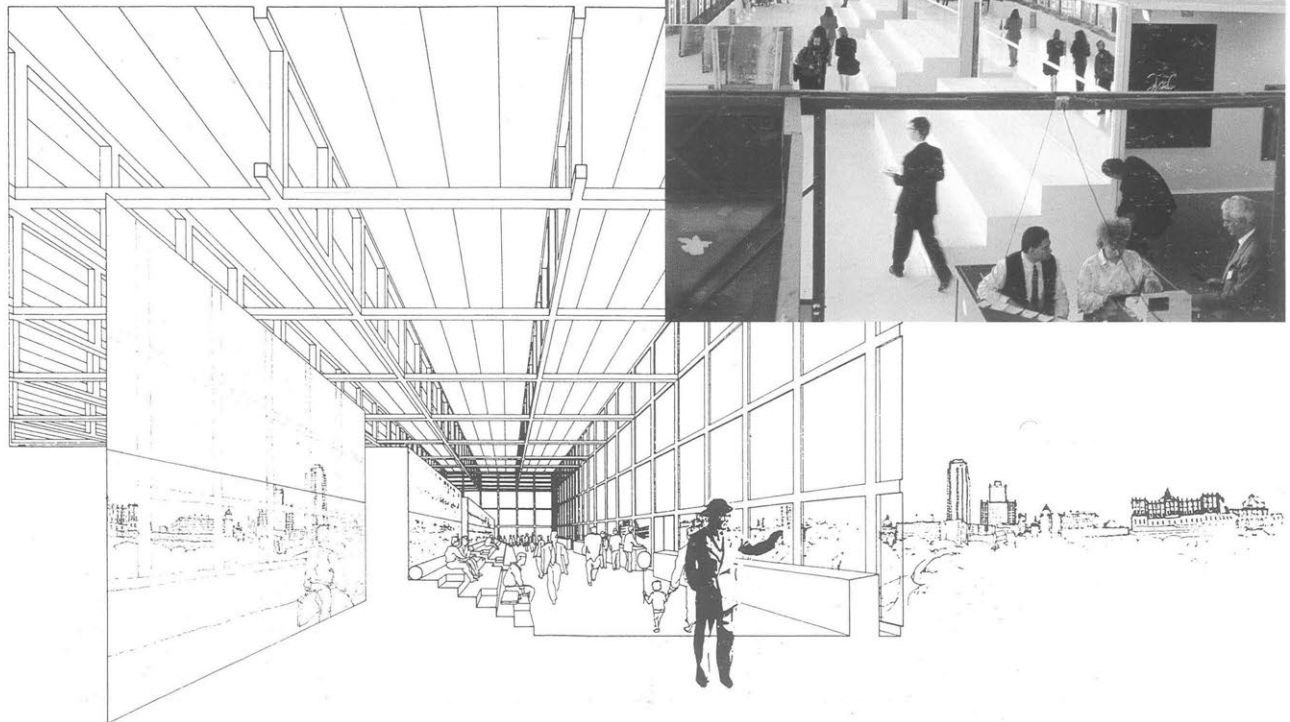
*The tiered
structure facing
the city, and a
perspective section.*

We had at our disposal one of the most rigorous and beautiful pieces of architecture in Madrid: The Palacio de Cristal of the Casa de Campo, a work by F. Asís Cabrero. A paradigm of Modern Architecture, the huge glass box is built using a simple three-dimensional structure that roofs over an open expanse from which the visitor can contemplate

the vista of the western edge of Madrid.

The main idea of the intervention was to regenerate the order and tension of said space. If this was to be a fair with stands running along a number of streets, as in some ideal city, then they ought to have a beginning and an end. The rest areas were laid out at this end, as a sort of 'belvedere'. Their being sit-

ed along the final stretch of the east facade had two consequences: the emphatic referencing of these areas, ever in the background, and the incorporation of the landscape through the huge glass facades, which meant that the spaces seemed to spill out over the surrounding countryside. To contemplate it, stepped seats, tiers, were positioned to face this splendid panorama.



García Marcos House, Valdemoro,
Madrid, 1991

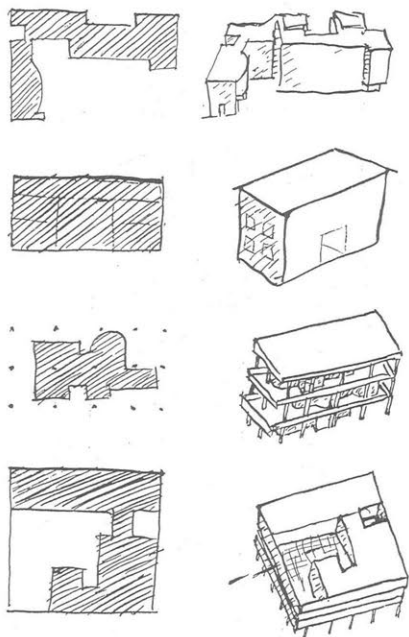
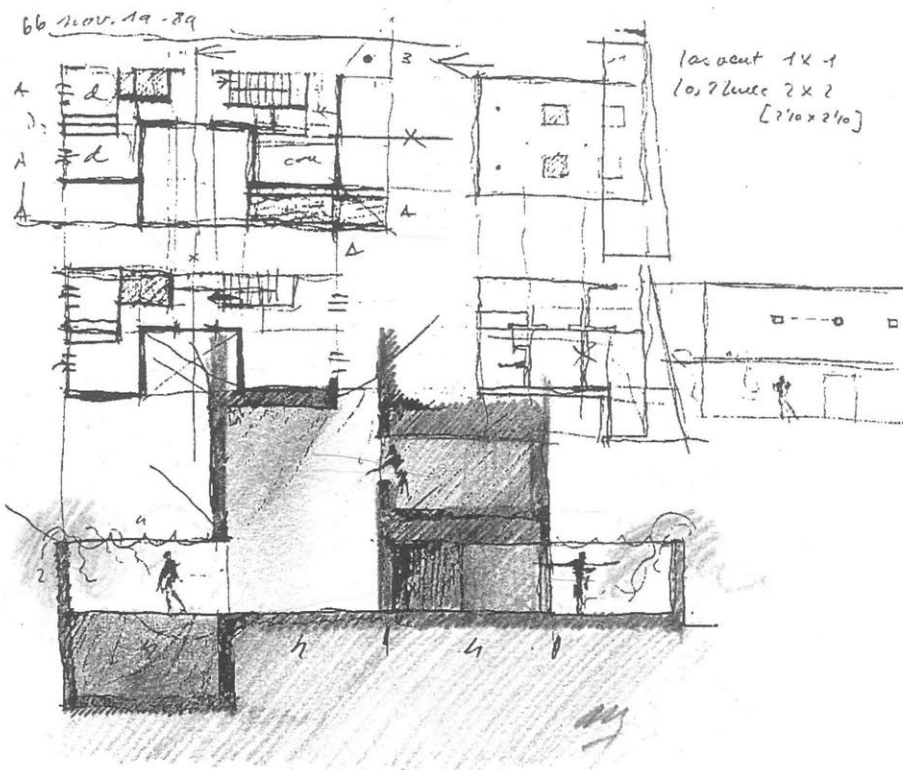
Architect's sketches,
the entrance corner,
and compositional
sketches of the
La Roche House,
the house in
Garches, the house
in Stuttgart,
and Le Corbusier's
Ville Savoie.

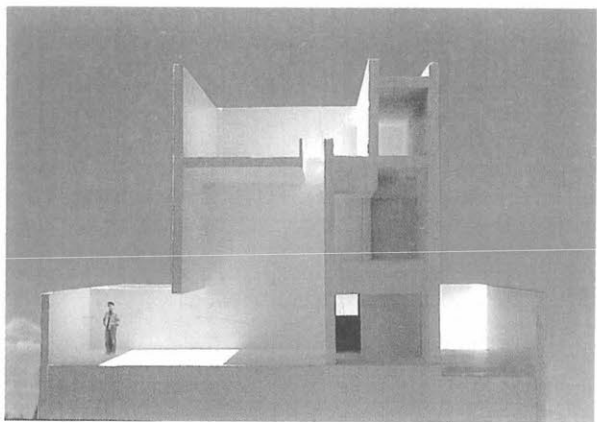
A family house in a typical residential area on the outskirts of Valdemoro (Madrid). The plot is 15 x 21 meters in size, on a corner and with two facades giving onto the street.

The site is enclosed by walls, like a box open to the sky. In the middle, and according with the previously established setbacks, there is a white rectangular prism with a base 8 x 14 meters in size.

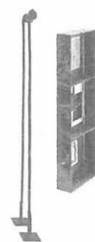
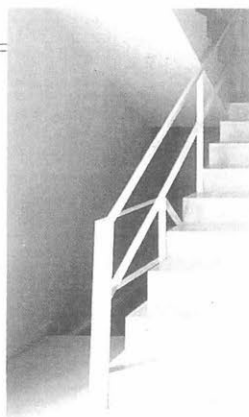
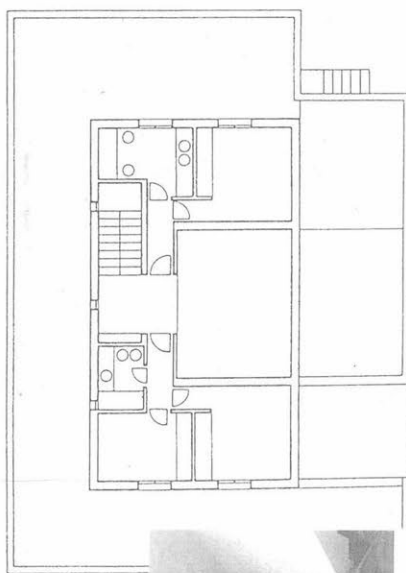
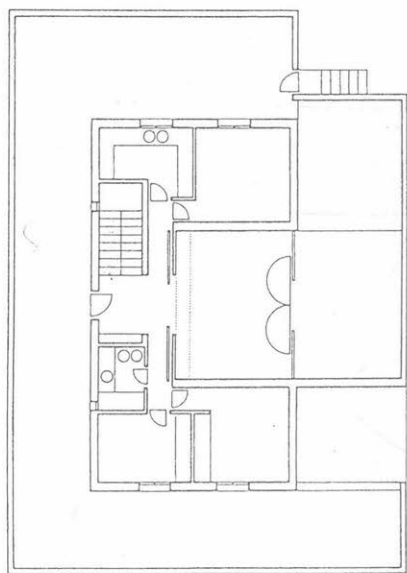
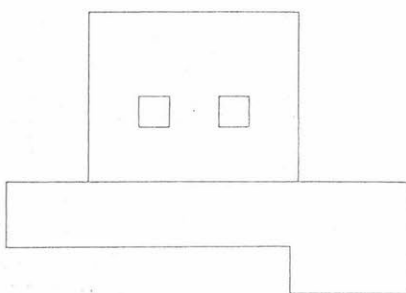
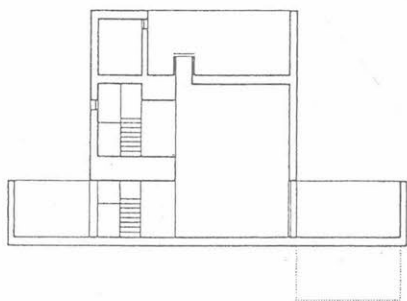
This box is organized around a twin-level, convergent central space which is crossed diagonally by the Light. From a skylight in the roof a vertical light which goes from side to side. From a large picture window a horizontal light which does the same.

And so, through Light and Proportion, a small and simple enclosed house becomes a large and open house in which, using almost nothing, everything is possible. 'Une boîte à miracles', in short.

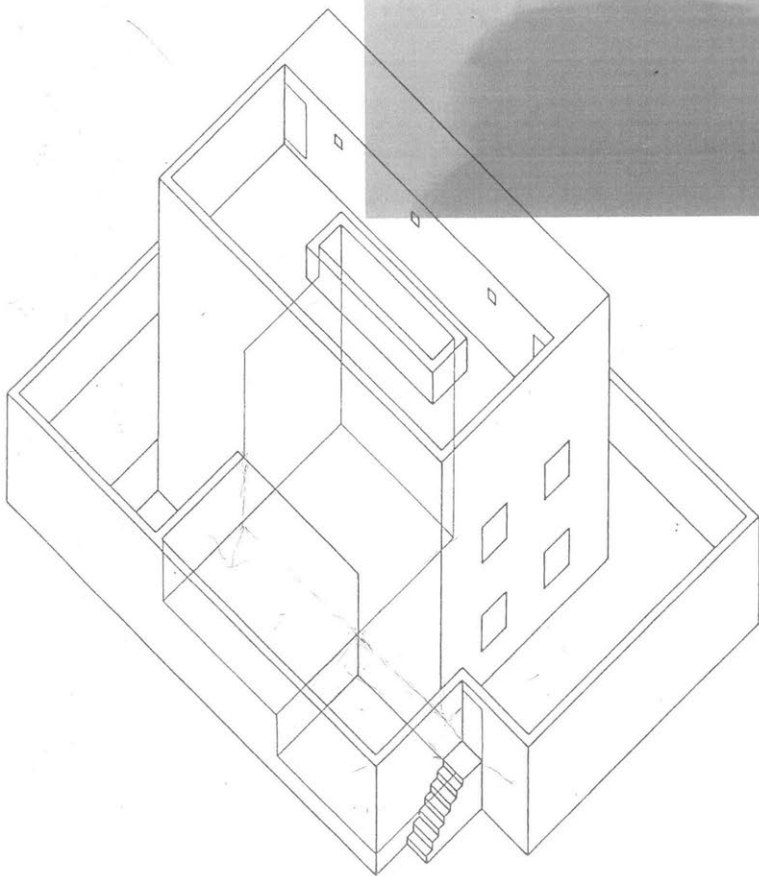
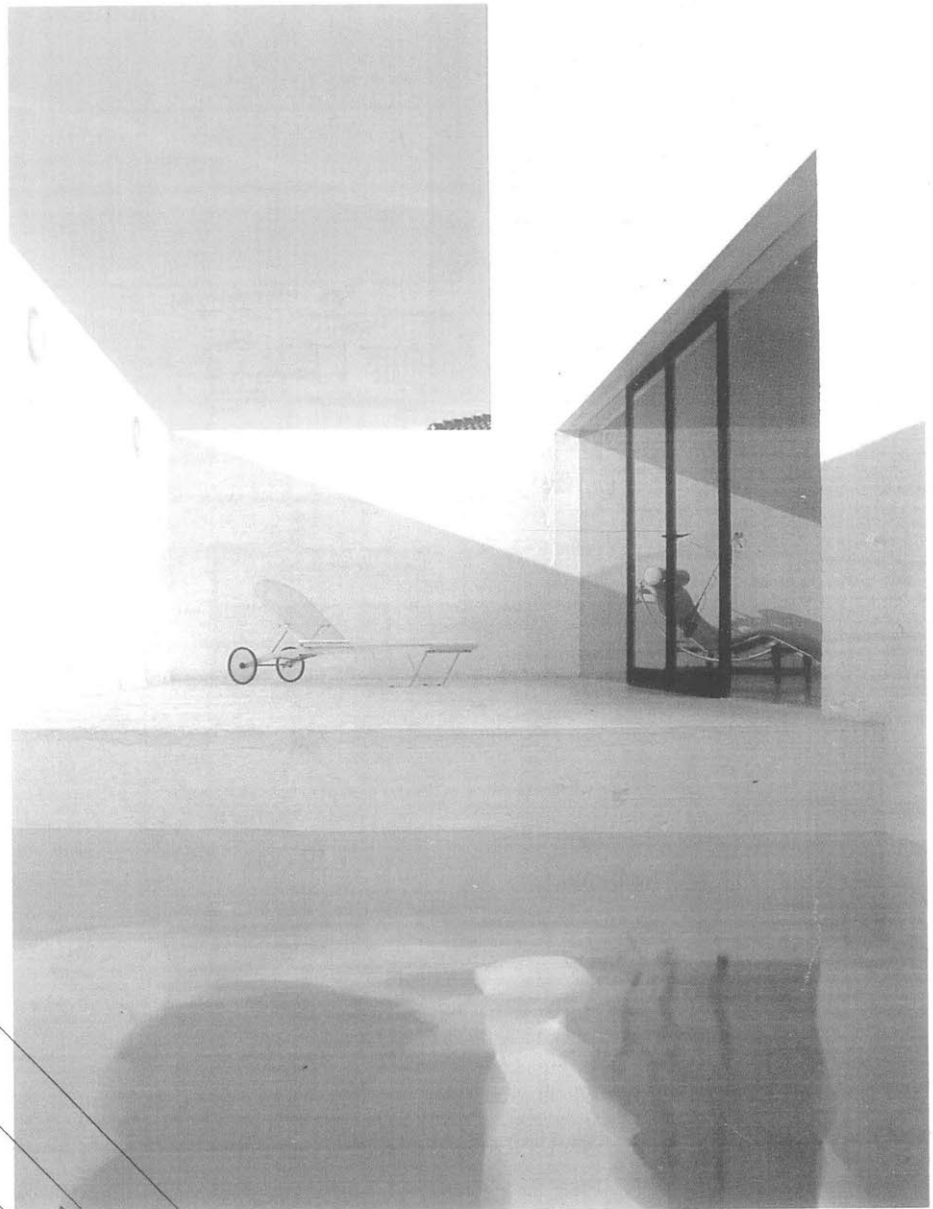




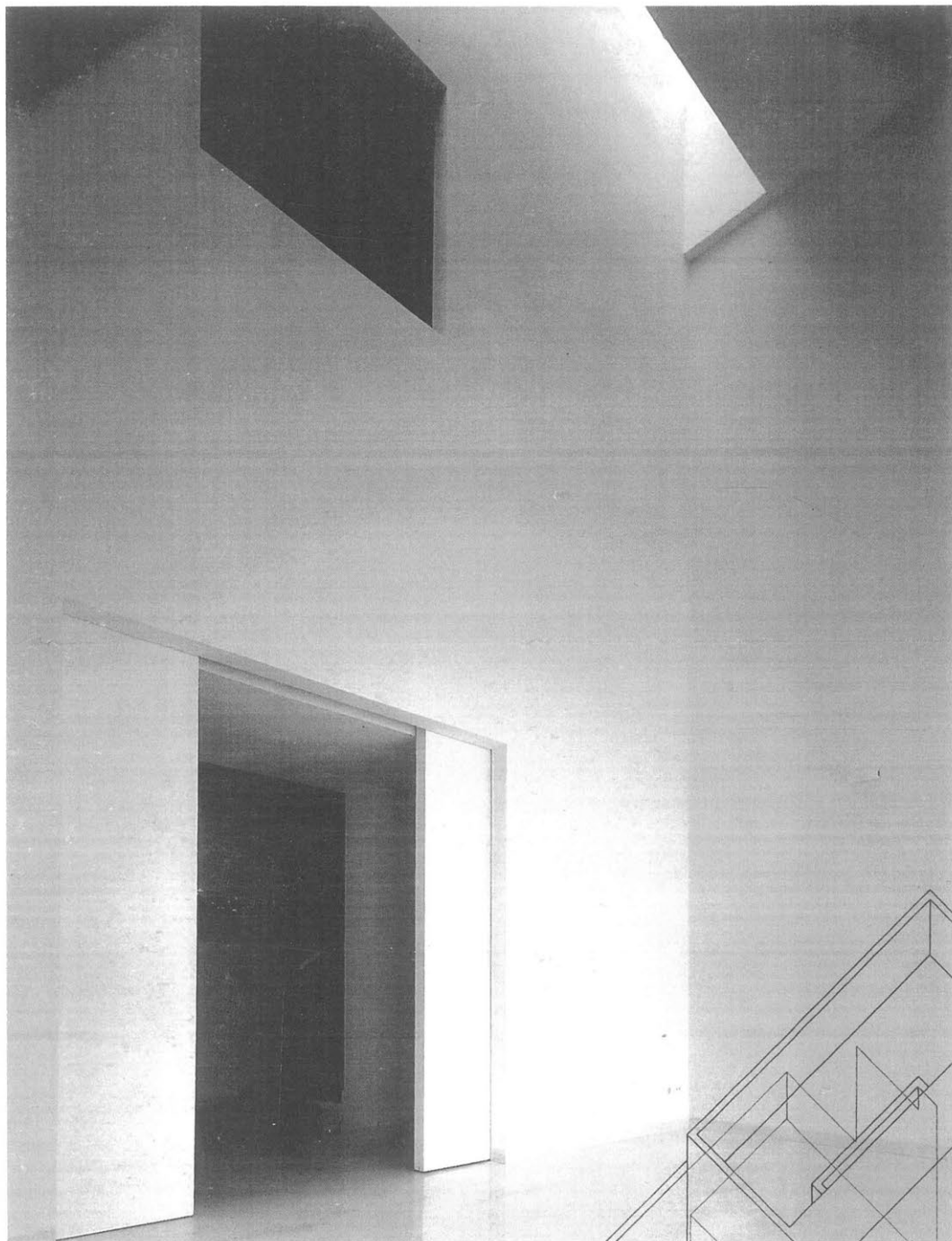
Cutaway model showing living-room; cross section, side elevation, plans of ground and first floors, and internal circulation.



*The courtyard with
mirror pool, and
axonometric
showing the
double-height
living-room.*







The living space overlooked by the upper-level areas, the skylight, and axonometric showing the entrance front.

The living space illuminated by the skylight and garden window.

